Serfojee Rajah 1819

LORD BYRON

AND

SOME OF HIS CONTEMPORARIES;

WITH

RECOLLECTIONS OF

THE AUTHOR'S LIFE,

AND OF HIS

VISIT TO ITALY.

2014
THE TANJORE MAHARAJA SERFOGI'S ✻ MAHAL.

BY LEIGH HUNT.

"It is for slaves to lie, and for freemen to speak truth.

"In the examples, which I here bring in, of what I have heard, read, done, or said, I have forbid myself to dare to alter even the most light and indifferent circumstances. My conscience does not falsify one tittle. What my ignorance may do, I cannot say." MONTAIGNE.

SECOND EDITION.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

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THE TANJORE MAHARAJA SERFOGI'S SARASWATI MAHAL.

PREFACE.

The reader will oblige me by letting me explain to him, how the volume, here offered to his perusal, came to be what it is. I think it due to myself to make the explanation; and as a conscientious reader of the prefaces of other men, I may request his indulgence without scruple.

The work was originally intended to be nothing but a selection from the Author's writings, preceded by a biographical sketch. I engaged for it, together with another work, as soon as I returned to England; but the delight of finding myself among

my old scenes and friends, the prospect of better health and resources, the feeling of the first taste of comfort (a novelty unknown for years), and the very dread of seeing this new piece of rose-colour in my existence vanish before the re-exertion of my brain and the ink-spots it produces between me and the sun,—all conspired with bad habits of business and the sorriest arithmetic, to make me avail myself unawares of the handsome treatment of my publisher, and indulge in too long a holiday. I wrote, but I wrote little: I had not even yet learned how much I might have done with that little, if done regularly; and the consequence was, that time crept on, uneasiness returned, and I found myself painfully anxious to show my employer how much I would fain do for him. The worst of it was, that the sick hours which I dreaded on a renewal of work, returned upon me, aggravated by my not

having dared to encounter them sooner; and my anxieties became thus increased. I wished to make amends for loss of time: the plan of the book became altered; and I finally made up my mind to enlarge and enrich it with an account of Lord Byron.

It had been wondered, when I returned to England, how it was that I did not give the public an account of my intimacy with Lord Byron. I was told that I should put an end to a great deal of false biography, and do myself a great service besides. My refusal of this suggestion will at least show, that I was in no hurry to do the work for my own sake; and to say the truth, it would never have been done at all, but for the circumstances above-mentioned. I must even confess, that such is my dislike of these personal histories, in which it has been my lot to become a party, that had I been rich enough, and could have repaid the handsome

conduct of Mr. Colburn with its proper interest, my first impulse on finishing the work would have been to put it into the fire. Not that I have not written it conscientiously, and that it is not in every respect fit to appear; but it has long ceased to be within my notions of what is necessary for society, to give an unpleasant account of any man; and as to my own biography, I soon became tired of that. It is true, I should have entered into it in greater detail, and endeavoured to make the search into my thoughts and actions of some use, seeing that I had begun it at all; but I was warned off this ground as impossible on account of others, and gladly gave it up. The Byron part of the work I could not so well manage. What was to be told of the Noble Poet, involved of necessity a painful retrospect; and humanize as I may, and as I trust I do, upon him as well as every thing else,—and certain as I am, that although I

look upon this or that man as more or less pleasant and admirable, I partake of none of the ordinary notions of merit and demerit with regard to any one,—I could not conceal from myself, on looking over the manuscript, that in renewing my intercourse with him in imagination, I had involuntarily felt an access of the spleen and indignation, which I experienced as a man who thought himself ill-treated. With this, to a certain extent, the account is coloured, though never with a shadow of untruth; nor have I noticed a great deal that I should have done, had I been in the least vindictive, which is a vice I disclaim. If I know any two things in the world, and have any two good qualities to set off against many defects, it is that I am not vindictive, and that I speak the truth. I have not told all: for I have no right to do so. In the present case it would also be inhumanity, both to the dead and the living.

But what I have told is not to be gainsaid. Perhaps had I felt Lord Byron's conduct less than I did, I should have experienced less of it. Flattery might have done much with him; and I felt enough admiration of his talents, and sympathy with his common nature, to have given him all the delight of flattery without the insincerity of it, *had it been possible*. But nobody, who has not tried it, knows how hard it is to wish to love a man, and to find the enthusiasm of this longing worse than repelled. It was the death of my friend Shelley, and my own want of resources, that made me add this bitter discovery to the sum of my experience. The first time Lord Byron found I was in want, was the first time he treated me with disrespect. I am not captious: I have often been remonstrated with for not showing a stronger sense of enmity and ill-usage: but to be obliged, in the common sense of the word, and dis-

obliged at the same time, not only in my reasonablest expectations, but in the tenderest point of my nature, was what I could not help feeling, whether I had told the world of it or not. Besides, Lord Byron was not candid with me. He suffered himself to take measures, and be open to representations, in which I was concerned, without letting me know: and I know of no safety of intercourse on these terms, especially where it should be all sincerity or nothing.

Nevertheless, I subscribe so heartily to a doctrine eloquently set forth* by Mr. Hazlitt,—that whatever is good and true in the works of a man of genius, eminently belongs to and is a part of him, let him partake as he will of common infirmities,—that I cannot without regret think of the picture I have drawn of the infirmities of Lord Byron, common or uncommon, nor omit to set down this con-

* "In the "Plain Speaker," vol. ii. p. 418.

fession of an unwilling hand. *Fecit mœrens.* Let it be turned against myself, if it ought. The same may be said of my remarks on Mr. Hazlitt.* If no man reduces himself to a greater necessity for it than he, by the waywardness and cruelty of his temper, no man deserves it more for the cuts and furrows which his temper ploughs in his own face, and the worship which he pays to truth and beauty when it is not upon him. When we see great men capable of being inhuman in

* Since writing this Preface, the article here alluded to has been omitted, though not on Mr. Hazlitt's account, or my own; for however I might regret speaking disagreeable truths of any man, much more of one whose unquestionable love of truth would have reconciled him to the hearing them, the article had quite enough of what was panegyrical in it to do him justice. But more readers might have mistaken the object of it, than was desirable; and Mr. Hazlitt is ready enough, at all times, to save others the necessity of exhibiting his defects. Twenty such articles would not have put an end to the good understanding between us; so genuine indeed is his love of truth, violently as his passions may sometimes lead him to mistake it.

some things, while they are all over humanity in others, and add to the precious stock of human emotion, one is frightened to think what mistakes we may commit in our own self-knowledge. I, for one, willingly concede that the reader may know me better than myself, and punish me in his thought accordingly. Let me have only the benefit of the concession. I have been forced to give up, in my time, too many dreams of self-love, to deny myself the consolation of candour.

The account of Lord Byron was not intended to stand first in the book. I should have kept it for a climax. My own reminiscences, I fear, coming after it, will be like bringing back the Moselle, after devils and Burgundy. Time also, as well as place, is violated; and the omission of a good part of the autobiography, and substitution of detached portraits for inserted ones, have given altogether a different look to the pub-

lication from what was contemplated at first. But my publisher thought it best; perhaps it is so: and I have only to hope, that in adding to the attractions of the title-page, it will not make the greater part of the work seem unworthy of it.

THE TANJORE MAHARAJA SERFOGI'S SARASWATI MAHAL.

PREFACE

TO THE SECOND EDITION.

THE appearance of this cheaper edition will put an end, I hope, to the misconceptions occasioned by partial extracts: at least with all honest readers who shall see it. To others of that class, if I had them within hearing, I should say, that they go counter to their own principles, or perhaps are not quite so unwilling to think evil as they suppose, when they condemn a man without hearing the whole of his case, and without knowing all that he has to say, of himself as well as of others. But these, I trust, are few in comparison with my honest

and hearty defenders,—friends indeed,—for they burst upon me when I most needed them.

As for misrepresentations arising from dishonesty, or from ignorance, or a passionate mixture of both, I am too well aware of a certain quarter of the press not to have been prepared for them; and have too little respect for it, to feel them more than I ought. It is in the nature of things for those who differ with society, to be misconceived even by the best men, who are not very discerning: how much more must they reckon upon the attacks and mis-statements of those, whom a thousand fancied interests and mortified self-loves enlist on the side of abuse? The public themselves, as a body, have their vices; and conscious of practising a good deal of deception with one another, and persuading themselves it is unavoidable, are disposed to prefer a good regular scandal-monger whom

they can despise, before a humanist who speaks the truth in zeal and candour, let his sympathy with mankind at large be never so unequivocal. It is true, I believe he ultimately makes his way with them. They feel it to be their interest that he should; and they learn even to bring out their virtues at the warmth of his belief in virtue. But meanwhile it is only by an effort of generosity, that any man implicated in the present state of things, can think the best of another, whose faults differ with his own, and whose good qualities appear to rebuke him.

All this will not hinder me from continuing to be sincere. I shall remain so to my dying day, knowing what an effect one strenuous example has upon society, contrary to what is eternally said to the reverse; and being of opinion, that the world is lost over and over again, solely by people's losing their hopes of

it in middle life. And I shall comfort myself under mistake and calumny meanwhile, by reflecting, that calumny itself is but a part of mistake; and that in thinking myself neither a bit better nor worse than any other man (which is what I think of all men, for they are all creatures of circumstance), I have a right both to the task which circumstances have put into my hands, and to the best-natured construction that can be put upon my own errors.

Agreeably to these opinions, but protesting at the same time against any conclusion to be drawn from the confession, apart from a knowledge of all which this book contains, I frankly avow, that as far as the sincerity in it has taken a splenetic turn, which was a thing unnecessary, I wish it had never been written. I have other reasons also for the regret, which are not so easy of explanation; though I should have entered very freely into them, had

the hostility I have provoked taken a more generous turn. I can only hope, that in the long run, the very defect will be of use to the world; but speaking for myself in the meantime, I confess I have no wish to be thought ill of by any body; and the fault (singularly enough) is at variance with what I have said against it in the book, when I speak of some of my former writings. But even this inconsistency may serve to show, how much I was bent upon making true portraitures, rather than hostile ones:—it was any thing but hostility which made me take the pencil in hand, as I have shown in the former preface; and the reader may smile at my simplicity (though there is a lesson for him in it, if he does) when I state, that in the sharpest things which I have written of some of my adversaries, I thought rather to have awakened their remorse, than roused in them a new spirit of aggression. It is true, to injure produces a desire to injure again; so naturally impatient

is humanity of the very thought of being unjust. But aware of this cause of the infirmity, (which to know handsomely is to overcome) and anxious to make amends for any wrong pointed out to me, I am always fancying that others are willing to go through the same reflections, and seat themselves as tranquilly at the end of them. I forget that you cannot arrive at any superiority of candour, by whatever process of adversity and mortification, but the tone it gives you serves only to exasperate an uncandid enemy.

Among twenty articles which I understand have been written against me in various publications, one has appeared in the Quarterly Review, such as I should no more have noticed, or looked at, than the others, had it not been for a pretended fact or two, which it may be as well to set aside. It has been well observed, that to answer these Blackwood people properly, (for the Review, it seems, is now connected with the unprincipled

calumniators, and convicted cowards of that gang, and the article in question has all the marks of being written by one of them,) it would be necessary to set up a work like their own, in which truth and decency should be treated with avowed contempt; no connexion spared, however private; and people's very lameness and calamities thrust in their teeth, as if they were crimes. And indeed it would be no wonder, some day, if some such thing were to happen; and a pretty Devil-on-Two-Sticks' view afforded us, by persons more angry than conscientious, of all that has been done, and can be fancied, among the hypocrites of the establishment. But this, at all events, is not a task for me; who, besides being hampered with humanities, can see no reason for objecting to the use of falsehood by others, if we can persuade ourselves it is warrantable in us. Others might pretend, that it was as good in their hands, and for some like benefit of re-action.

The article in the Quarterly is of the old description of things of this kind,—shallow and mean; colouring all, as it goes, to suit its purposes; criticising the pretensions of another with nothing but airs and assumptions; and paying the cause it worships the usual happy compliment, of thinking falsehood and malignity necessary to its support. The sole object is to put the book down; to put it down,—not because there is nothing in it, or it is not true, (for the Reviewer could as little write it, as he could imitate the truth of it,) but because it is full of a sincerity and speculation equally hateful to the "rottenness in the state of Denmark;" and this sincerity is to be put down by falsehood! and this speculation by dullness! a mode of settling things, which luckily is impossible in the long run, and is far less easy than it used to be for the time. Yes, as the Reviewer repeats with an hysterical impulse, "the schoolmaster is abroad." "Twopenny

trash" has got beyond Six Shilling; and hundreds take up the Quarterly Review and laugh at it, who, a dozen years back, would have heard the canting rogue at his half-way house, and thought there was something in him. Mr. Murray should really keep a more sober eye on the times, and get cleverer men to do his work; for public knowledge is advancing, while he is dozing; and the old mediocrity will not do, however malignant. An additional portion of servility was still less desirable. His new writer, with a solemnity that would better have become the old lady in the Castle of Tillietudlem, than a modern pretender to literature, talks of "high rank," as if it were one of the cardinal virtues. Temperance, sobriety, and "high rank," he thinks, (which, by the way, is not considerate towards his employer,) are qualities that become a young gentleman; but temperance and sobriety may be wanting, and the matter decently hushed up, provided there be

"high rank." The mention of the deficiency is unpolite and unedifying; not to pay homage to the possession, is unfeeling.

Agreeably to this system of morals, it is curious to see, in his review of the present work, what a number of things, extracts from letters, &c. are brought in to tell in Lord Byron's favour, which really tell against him, and furnish aggravated proofs of his little claim to be esteemed. Among these are his virulence against Mr. Keats and others; his remark, (in a spirit of infinite aristocratical absurdity, which shows how much he had been injured by being a Lord,) that "they never lived in *high life* nor *solitude!*" (as if the millions of human hearts that lay between were nothing!) his splenetic inventions against others, and his extraordinary forgetfulness of his own offences. The passage is quoted where he speaks of my "not very tractable children." Thank God, they were not tractable

to him! I have something very awful to say on that point, in case it is forced from me. Then the same man, who talked as he did about his wife, over and over again, to the whole world, asserts his incapability of violating domestic confidence; and the servility of the poor reviewer is carried to its climax, in the assumption, that what appeared weak or insincere in the conversation of the Noble Lord (as if his very title could not have spoilt him and helped to make it so) was only so much profundity beyond the capacity of his hearers, or done out of an intention of making his guests ridiculous, and so violating the very hospitality which they are accused of not being grateful for! These are the airs of a footman, eager to degrade others, out of an instinct of his own condition; and raising a servile laugh in honour of his master, for insulting some stranger at his door.

But I am noticing this born slave more than I intended. One must have some respect for a writer, to contend with him; and I keep what I have to say on these matters, till the promised work appears from the pen of Mr. Moore. Meanwhile, however, in order to answer a question put to me in the Quarterly Review, I will suppose that I heard it elsewhere, and that it was put by some honest man.

"It is well known," says the Review, "that Lord Byron took leave finally of Mr. Leigh Hunt by letter. The letter in question we never saw, but we have conversed with those who read it; and from their account of its contents—they describe it as a document of considerable length, and as containing a full narrative of the whole circumstances under which Lord Byron and Mr. Hunt met and parted, according to his Lordship's view of the case—we confess we have been rather surprised to find it

altogether omitted in Mr. Leigh Hunt's quarto. Mr. Hunt prints very carefully various letters, in which Lord Byron treats of matters nowise bearing on the differences which occurred between these two distinguished contemporaries: and our question is, was it from humanity to the dead, or from humanity to the living, that Mr. Leigh Hunt judged it proper to omit in this work the apparently rather important letter to which we refer? If Mr. Hunt has had the misfortune to mislay the document, and sought in vain for it amongst his collections, he ought, we rather think, to have stated that fact, and stated also, in so far as his memory might serve him, his impression of the character and tendency of this valedictory epistle. But in case he has both lost the document and totally forgotten what it contained, we are happy in having this opportunity of informing him, that a copy of it exists in very safe keeping."

I am very glad to hear it. Pray let it be

brought forward, for I never received any such valedictory epistle. Lord Byron certainly did take leave of me by letter. It was an epistle equally friendly and short, and purported that there was no necessity for our meeting on the occasion, because leave-taking was painful; and therefore he wished me well, and was very sincerely mine, &c. That he was not very sincerely mine, I know very well; and so did he. But that is another matter. It is insinuated (for even the habitual falsehoods of the reviewer do not enable him to doubt that I speak the truth, and that it is better to get at the truth out of my own mouth, than charge me directly with want of it) that I have kept back this one letter written to me by Lord Byron, while I have published various others nowise bearing on the differences between us. I have said in the book, (see vol. i. p. 250,) that I have other letters in my possession, written while Lord Byron was in Italy, and varying in degrees of cordiality, according

to the mood he happened to be in; and, I add, "they are for the most part on matters of dispute between us, and are all written in an uneasy, factitious spirit, as different from the straight-forward and sincere-looking style of the present, as his aspect in old times varied with his later one." All these shall come forward, when Mr. Moore's book appears; and if the person who holds the alleged "valedictory Epistle," so long and so hostile, for which the other valedictory Epistle was substituted, so short and so friendly, will come forward with it, and is a credible person, (for the reviewer's word would go for nothing,) I shall be very happy to see it for the first time, and to give it the due answer.

What the reviewer says about Mr. Shelley's having confessed to somebody, "with tears," that "he well knew he had been all in the wrong," is a phenomenon, which must come attested by all the magistrates Autolycus could

have thought of, before the most gullible persons (out of the pale of the Quarterly) will believe it. With the exception of Queen Mab, I never remember him to have regretted any thing he had written but one poem with an obscure title, the existence of which is hardly known. His unfavourable opinion of Queen Mab he expressed publicly. His hopes had diminished when I last saw him; but when I told him that I hoped still, and that I thought hope itself a part of success, he fully assented to the utility of my opinion; and neither in word nor deed did he show himself a jot different from what he had ever been, except in his admiration of the satirical writings of Lord Byron. Lord Byron himself he spoke of as a man the most disagreeable to have any thing to do with, and one whose connexion he would have given up for ever, had he not thought it might turn to my advantage, and perhaps to the noble Lord's in consequence. As to the

alleged change in Mr. Shelley, Lord Byron, for one, certainly had no conception of any such thing: at least, if he has said so in his letters, (the assertions in which our credulous reviewer takes all for "matter of fact,") it was totally in opposition to the character, with which (in the teeth of his excessive eulogies of the deceased) he threatened to brand his memory, the moment he thought he had found reason to quarrel with it.

But I am again led away to say more than is necessary at present. I wait for Mr. Moore. Mr. Moore ought to have been ashamed of himself, when he acted in that underhand manner against his old acquaintance and his own cause. He knew what a situation I was in; what a family I had; what struggles I had gone through, for the sake of freedom; and how openly I had ever behaved to himself, both in what I ventured to praise in him and to differ with; and yet all this did not hinder him

from practising against the Liberal, in a way the most disingenuous towards me, and upon grounds the most ridiculous in him. I have since expressed my resentment in a strong but not ungenerous manner; and he has the credit, upon the very ground on which he ought to have spared me originally, and which collects in one burning spot of thought all that is painful in my past life, and bitter at present, of aiming a blow at me as the father of a family (which I am), and a fellow turn-spit (which I never was). I could have answered his metaphors with interest, had the bandying of abuse been to my taste, and many extreme cares not been upon me; but the same circumstances in my position, which, connected with all that I have done and hazarded in this world, show how impossible it was for me to speak of the dead in any rascally spirit of calculation, will not allow me to spare any truth whatsoever, (the other sex not suffering

by it,) which will hinder me from being crushed; and should his book render it necessary, I will most assuredly spare neither him, nor his publisher, nor any one person or thing, short of the exception just noticed, which will serve to fill up all that has been omitted, and to show of what sort of stuff a Lord and his advisers can be made.

Talk of speaking ill of a dead Lord, and an imaginary patron! How have I not been talked of and misrepresented in these matters between Lord Byron and myself, while I did not say a word on the subject? What patron, or dead person, lord or commoner, or king, or what excess of human infirmity, did Lord Byron spare, when the mood was upon him? How many persons has Mr. Moore himself not attacked in his day? Many that never offended him, and some whose calamities gave them a right to be spared. How might not Lord Byron (as the world shall see) have trampled

on the memory of my friend Mr. Shelley, if I had not told him I should be compelled to make him repent it?—Mr. Shelley, who had been really his benefactor, if people knew all. And what sort of living people did this lion of the perfumed locks (in whose favour I have been gifted with so many new and ingenious appellations) select and pitch upon, on whom to show his lion-like nature? On the man that would have taken the thorn out of his foot?—or on the woman who had lain in his bosom? These are not the sort of defences to be found for him; nor can any question be begged in his favour which does not carry the whole of humanity along with it. Such I have never denied him; and such shall not be denied me.

If any man, after reading the whole of my book, be capable of thinking that I have uttered a single thing which I do not believe to be true, or that in what I have uttered I was

prompted by any impulses incapable of a generous construction, he is speaking out of his own instinctive meanness, and his own conscious want of veracity; and I return him any epithets he may be inclined to bestow upon me, as equally unfit for me to receive, and himself to part with.

If any one can convince me of an error,—I am not in love with error, but truth—and will gladly rectify it. I boast of being a Liberal in the sense laid down the other day by the *Morning Chronicle,* and am ready on all occasions to be tried by it.*

Finally, if any one asks what it is that supports me under the trying circumstances,

* "The terms *liberal* and *illiberal,*" says the *Chronicle,* "would, in the present day, be more appropriate than those of Whig and Tory. *Liberal* supposes an homage to knowledge, a disposition to submit all opinions to the test of free enquiry, and to be always open to conviction. Whig and Tory, as opposed to each other, as we have observed, is a merely nominal distinction; but liberal and illiberal are as opposite as light and darkness."

in which I have to work out (as becomes me) the remainder of my days, I answer, that it is my belief in the natural goodness and capability of mankind, and the testimonies borne to my endeavours in consequence by the love of those who know me most intimately, and the esteem and good word of those who publicly agree with me. I cannot express the sense I have (at least I am not well enough at present to dare to let my heart attempt it) of the eloquent and cordial articles that have appeared in defence of this work in various journals, both in town and country. What renders them especially welcome (and I may mention in particular, though not all on that account, those in the Sunday Monitor, the Hereford Independent, and the Athenæum,—the last in a friendly quarter, but evidently by one who thinks for himself,) is, that the authors of some of them state themselves to have grown up in

intimacy with my writings, and to have had their opinions materially affected by them; so that every noble aspiration they utter, and every graceful sentence in which it is clothed, seem to come home to me like golden sheaves of the harvest that I have contributed to sow. This, indeed, makes me feel prouder than self-knowledge will allow me to feel with any thing more my own.

The writer in the Athenæum, (whose remarks I had not entirely seen till the rest of this preface had been written,) has offered me advice on one or two points, which I shall carefully consider, and upon which I can very well imagine I stand in need of it. But he is mistaken in thinking that I quarrelled with Mr. Moore, merely for saying that the Liberal had a "taint" in it. It was a thing bad enough to say, and foolish; but Mr. Moore might have accused the Liberal of having a thousand taints in it, had

he discussed that matter openly with us. It was the secret way in which he did it, and in which he spoke against us, that constituted the offence. I verily believe, that it is not in the power of sincerity and openness to offend me, beyond an almost immediate forgiveness. I am sure, that sincerity and good-nature, united, could not possibly do so, let the truths they told me make me never so melancholy. I hardly dare tell the reader, how little even the grossest abuse affects me, in the angry sense of the word, when I think the writer a sincere person. But if there is any thing in the world that I feel to be provoking, it is want of fairness and open dealing. It is vexatious enough even in such shallow fellows as this knave of the Quarterly; but to meet with it among friends, and friends of humanity at large (for such I take all men of genius to be by na-

ture), and to see them consenting to carry on this tragic farce of insincerity, which is the very thing that cuts up their own comfort with mankind, and makes them fancy them not to be bettered,—this,—if one did not know how weak a thing it was, and how contrary to the part which the unwearied Spirit of the Universe is for ever suggesting to the young and enthusiastic hearts with which it seems to begin its endeavours over again—might be thought sufficient to make one lie down at once, and die of this bad jest of the universe. Let me not be supposed to believe in any such alternative. The sight of one open face,—I could almost say, of one green and quiet field,—would be enough to make me hope to the last; and I have hope for the next world, should it fail me in this. But the moment is a bitter one, which discovers to

us, that those of whom we have entertained the most pleasant ideas, can fail us in the most unpleasant manner. The very light of day, even for ordinary purposes, seems taken from before one's eyes, if we cannot rely upon those about us, either for friendship or enmity, nor know who it is that is putting obstacles in our path.

The truth is, Mr. Moore could not state his objections to the Liberal fairly, without bringing his own principles into question:—he did not choose to do that—and therefore he should have made no objections at all. If he had any thing else to say, for Lord Byron or himself, why did he not speak out?

Had Mr. Moore been sincere, he would have saved me the trouble of the present work; or, at least, of a great deal which gives me any pain in it. Had Lord Byron

been sincere, he would have saved a great many people, and himself, a world of wretchedness.

Let the reader consider but these two facts, and make his own deductions.

ILLUSTRATIONS.

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FAC-SIMILE OF LORD BYRON'S POETRY, FROM AN ALTERED COPY
OF ENGLISH BARDS & SCOTCH REVIEWERS, NEVER PUBLISHED.

Behold — Ye tarts one moment spare his text!
~~In many marble-covered volumes view~~
's last work — & worst — until his
HAYLEY, ~~in vain attempting something new,~~
poor couplets into plays, (next ~~next~~)
Whether he spin ~~his comedies in rhyme,~~
Or ~~scrawl as Wood and Barclay walk, 'gainst time.~~
damn the dead with purgatorial praise

FAC-SIMILE OF M^R. SHELLEY'S POETRY, FROM A M.S. OF THE REVOLT OF ISLAM.

"Virtue, & Hope, & Love, like light & Heaven,
Surround the world. — We are their chosen slaves.
Has not the whirlwind of our spirit driven
Truth's deathless germs to thought's remotest caves?

FAC-SIMILE OF M^R. KEATS'S POETRY, FROM THE ORIGINAL M.S. OF HYPERION.

Scarce Images of life one here one there
Lay vast and edgeways like a dismal cirque
Of druid ~~stone~~ ~~temple~~ stones upon a forlorn Moor
When the chill rain begins at shut of eve
In dull November and their chancel-vault
The heaven itself is blinded ~~through~~ the Mooneless ~~long~~ night

Sid^y Hall, sculp^t

THE TANJORE MAHARAJA SERFOGI'S SARASWATI MAHAL.

LORD BYRON

AND SOME OF

HIS CONTEMPORARIES.

THE first time I saw Lord Byron, he was rehearsing the part of Leander, under the auspices of Mr. Jackson the prize-fighter. It was in the river Thames, before he went to Greece. I had been bathing, and was standing on the floating machine adjusting my clothes, when I noticed a respectable-looking manly person, who was eyeing something at a distance. This was Mr. Jackson waiting for his pupil. The latter was swimming with somebody for a wager. I forget what his tutor said of him; but he spoke in terms of

praise. I saw nothing in Lord Byron at that time, but a young man who, like myself, had written a bad volume of poems; and though I had a sympathy with him on this account, and more respect for his rank than I was willing to suppose, my sympathy was not an agreeable one; so, contenting myself with seeing his Lordship's head bob up and down in the water, like a buoy, I came away.

Lord Byron was afterwards pleased to regret, that I had not stayed. He told me, that the sight of my volume at Harrow had been one of his incentives to write verses, and that he had had the same passion for friendship that I had displayed in it. To my astonishment, he quoted some of the lines, and would not hear me speak ill of them. This was when I was in prison, where I first became personally acquainted with his Lordship. His harbinger was Moore. Moore told me, that, besides liking my politics, he liked "The Feast of the Poets," and would be glad to make my acquaintance. I said I felt myself highly flattered, and should be proud to entertain his Lordship as well as a poor patriot could. He

was accordingly invited to dinner. His friend only stipulated, that there should be "plenty of fish and vegetables for the noble bard," his Lordship at that time being Brahminical in his eating. He came, and we passed a very pleasant afternoon, talking of books, and school, and the Reverend Mr. Bowles; of the pastoral innocence of whose conversation some anecdotes were related, that would have much edified the spirit of Pope, had it been in the room.

I saw nothing at first but single-hearted and agreeable qualities in Lord Byron. My wife, with the quicker eyes of a woman, was inclined to doubt them. Visiting me one day, when I had a friend with me, he seemed uneasy, and asked without ceremony, when he should find me alone. My friend, who was a man of taste and spirit, and the last in the world to intrude his acquaintance, was not bound to go away because another person had come in; and besides, he naturally felt anxious to look at so interesting a visitor; which was paying the latter a compliment. But his Lordship's will was disturbed, and he vented his spleen accordingly. I took it at the time for a piece of sim-

plicity, blinded perhaps by the flattery insinuated towards myself; but my wife was right. Lord Byron's nature, from the first, contained that mixture of disagreeable with pleasanter qualities, which I had afterwards but too much occasion to recognize. He subsequently called on me in the prison several times, and used to bring books for my Story of Rimini, which I was then writing. He would not let the footman bring them in. He would enter with a couple of quartos under his arm; and give you to understand, that he was prouder of being a friend and a man of letters, than a lord. It was thus that by flattering one's vanity, he persuaded us of his own freedom from it; for he could see very well, that I had more value for lords than I supposed.

In the correspondence at the end of the present memoir, the reader will find some letters addressed to me at this period by Lord Byron. He was a warm politician, and thought himself earnest in the cause of liberty. His failure in the House of Lords is well known. He was very candid about it; said he was much frightened, and should never be able to do any thing

that way. Lords of all parties came about him, and consoled him; he particularly mentioned Lord Sidmouth, as being unaffectedly kind. When I left prison, I was too ill to return his visits. He pressed me very much to go to the theatre with him; but illness, and the dread of committing my critical independence, alike prevented me. His Lordship was one of a management that governed Drury-lane Theatre at that time, and that made a sad business of their direction, as amateur-managers have always done. He got nothing by it but petty vexations, and a good deal of scandal.

I was then living at Paddington. I had a study looking over the fields towards Westbourne Green: which I mention, because, besides the pleasure I took in it after my prison, and the gratitude I owe to a fair cousin, who saved me from being burnt there one fine morning, I received visits in it from two persons of a remarkable discrepancy of character—Lord Byron and Mr. Wordsworth. Of Mr. Wordsworth I will speak hereafter. Lord Byron, I thought, took a pleasure in my room, as contrasted with the splendour of his great house.

He had too much reason to do so. His domestic troubles were just about to become public. His appearance at that time was the finest I ever saw it, a great deal finer than it was afterwards, when he was abroad. He was fatter than before his marriage, but only just enough so to complete the manliness of his person; and the turn of his head and countenance had a spirit and elevation in it, which though not unmixed with disquiet, gave him altogether a nobler look, than I ever knew him to have, before or since. His dress, which was black, with white trowsers, and which he wore buttoned close over the body, completed the succinctness and gentlemanliness of his appearance. I remember one day, as he stood looking out of the window, he resembled in a lively manner the portrait of him by Phillips, by far the best that has appeared; I mean the best of him at his best time of life, and the most like him in features as well as expression. He sat one morning so long, that Lady Byron sent up twice to let him know she was waiting. Her Ladyship used to go on in the carriage to Henderson's Nursery Ground, to get flowers. I

had not the honour of knowing her, nor ever saw her but once, when I caught a glimpse of her at the door. I thought she had a pretty earnest look, with her "pippin" face; an epithet by which she playfully designated herself.

The first visit I paid Lord Byron was just after their separation. The public, who took part with the lady, as they ought to do, (women in their relations with the other sex being under the most unhandsome disadvantages) had, nevertheless, no idea of the troubles which her husband was suffering at that time. He was very ill, his face jaundiced with bile; the renouncement of his society by Lady Byron had disconcerted him extremely, and was, I believe, utterly unlooked for; then the journals and their attacks upon him, were felt severely; and to crown all, he had an execution in his house. I was struck with the real trouble he manifested, compared with what the public thought of it. The adherence of his old friends was also touching. I saw Mr. Hobhouse and Mr. Scrope Davies (college friends of his) almost every time I called. Mr. Rogers was regular in his daily visits; and Lord Holland, he

said, was very kind to him. Finally, he took the blame of the quarrel to himself; and he enlisted my self-love so far on the side of Lady Byron, as to tell me that she liked my poem, and had compared his temper to that of Giovanni, my heroine's consort. In all this I beheld only a generous nature, subject perhaps to ebullitions of ill-temper, but candid, sensitive, extremely to be pitied, and if a woman knew how, or was permitted by others to love him, extremely to be loved.

What made me come the more warmly to this conclusion, was a letter which he showed me, written by Lady Byron *after* her departure from the house, and when she was on her way to the relations, who persuaded her not to return. It was signed with the epithet abovementioned; and was written in a spirit of good-humour, and even fondness, which though containing nothing but what a wife ought to write, and is the better for writing, was, I thought, almost too good to show. But the case was extreme; and the compliment to me, in showing it, appeared the greater. I was not aware at that time, that with a singular

incontinence, towards which it was lucky for a great many people that his friends were as singularly considerate, his Lordship was in the habit of making a confidant of every body he came nigh.

I will now tell the reader, very candidly, what I think of the whole of that matter. Every body knows, in the present beautiful state of the relations between the sexes, what is meant by marriages of convenience. They generally turn out to be as inconvenient, as persons, who are said to have arrived at years of discretion, are apt to be indiscreet. Lord Byron's was a marriage of convenience,—certainly at least on his own part. The lady, I have no doubt, would never have heard of it under that title. He married for money, but of course he wooed with his genius; and the lady persuaded herself that she liked him, partly because he had a genius, and partly because it is natural to love those who take pains to please us. Furthermore, the poet was piqued to obtain his mistress, because she had a reputation for being delicate in such matters; and the lady was piqued to become his wife,

not because she did not know the gentleman previously to marriage, but because she did, and hoped that her love, and her sincerity, and her cleverness, would enable her to reform him. The experiment was dangerous, and did not succeed. Another couple might have sat still, and sacrificed their comfort to the vanity of appearing comfortable. Lord Byron had too much self-will for this, and his lady too much sincerity,—perhaps too much alarm and resentment. The excess of his moods, which out of the spleen, and even self-reproach of the moment, he indulged in perhaps beyond what he really felt, were so terrifying to a young and mortified woman, that she began to doubt whether he was in possession of his senses. She took measures, which exceedingly mortified him, for solving this doubt; and though they were on good terms when she left an uneasy house to visit her friends in the country, and Lady Byron might, I have no doubt, have been persuaded by him to return, had there been as much love, or even address, on his side, as there was a wish to believe in his merit on her's,

it is no wonder that others, whom she had known and loved so much longer, and who felt no interest in being blind to his defects, should persuade her to stay away. The "*Farewell*" that he wrote, and that set so many tender-hearted white handkerchiefs in motion, only resulted from his poetical power of assuming an imaginary position, and taking pity on himself in the shape of another man. He had no love for the object of it, or he would never have written upon her in so different a style afterwards. Indeed, I do not believe that he ever had the good-fortune of knowing what real love is,—meaning by love the desire that is ennobled by sentiment, and that seeks the good and exaltation of the person beloved. He could write a passage now and then, which showed that he was not incapable of it; but the passion on which he delights to dwell, is either that of boys and girls, extremely prone and boarding-school; or of heroines, who take a delight in sacrificing themselves to wilful gentlemen.

I thought differently on this business at the time, though rather to the exculpation of the

gentleman, than blame of the lady. My present conclusions were confirmed during my visit to Italy. There is no doubt, that Lord Byron felt the scandal of the separation severely. It is likely, also, that he began to long for his wife's adherence the more, when he saw that she would not return. Perhaps he liked her the better. At all events, she piqued his will, which was his tender side; the circles were loud in his condemnation; and he was in perplexity about his child; in whom, as his only representative, and the descendant of two ancient families, he took great pride to the last. But his feelings, whatever they were, did not hinder him from wreaking his resentment in a manner which every one of his friends lamented; nor from availing himself, at a future day, of those rights of matrimonial property, which the gallant and chivalrous justice of the stronger sex has decreed to itself, as a consolation for not being able to make the lady comfortable.

From the time of my taking leave of Lord Byron in England, to the moment of our meeting in Italy, I scarcely heard of him, and never

from him. He had become not very fond of his reforming acquaintances. Shelley he knew, and lived a good deal with, in Switzerland; and he was intimate again with him in Italy; yet, in the list of the only persons whom, on some occasion or other, he mentioned publicly as having seen in that country, Mr. Shelley's name was omitted. I was therefore surprised, when I received the letter from my friend, which the reader will find in the Correspondence at the end of this memoir, and which contained a proposal from my former acquaintance, inviting me to go over, and set up a work with him. Mr. Shelley himself had repeatedly invited me abroad; and I had as repeatedly declined going, for the reason stated in my account of him. That reason was done away by the nature of this new proposal. I was ill; it was thought by many I could not live; my wife was very ill too; my family was numerous; and it was agreed by my partner in the Examiner, that while a struggle was made in England to reanimate that paper, injured by the peace, and by a variety of other circumstances, a simultaneous endeavour should be

made in Italy to secure new aid to our diminished fortunes, and new friends to the cause of liberty. My family, therefore, packed up their books, and prepared to go by sea.

Of my voyage I will give an account hereafter. My business at present is to speak of Lord Byron, to whose Italian residence I therefore hasten. In the harbour of Leghorn I found Mr. Trelawney. He was standing with his knight-errant aspect, dark, handsome, and mustachio'd, in Lord Byron's boat, the Bolivar, of which he had taken charge for his Lordship. In a day or two I went to see the noble Bard, who was in what the Italians call *villeggiatura* at Monte-Nero: that is to say, enjoying a country-house for the season. I there met with a singular adventure, which seemed to make me free of Italy and stilettos, before I had well set foot in the country. The day was very hot; the road to Monte-Nero was very hot, through dusty suburbs; and when I got there, I found the hottest-looking house I ever saw. Not content with having a red wash over it, the red was the most unseasonable of all reds, a salmon colour. Think

of this, flaring over the country in a hot Italian sun!

But the greatest of all the heats was within. Upon seeing Lord Byron, I hardly knew him, he was grown so fat; and he was longer in recognizing me, I had grown so thin. He was dressed in a loose nankin jacket and white trowsers, his neckloth open, and his hair in thin ringlets about his throat: altogether presenting a very different aspect from the compact, energetic, and curly-headed person, whom I had known in England.

He took me into an inner-room, and introduced me to a young lady in a state of great agitation. Her face was flushed, her eyes lit up, and her hair (which she wore in that fashion) looked as if it streamed in disorder. This was the daughter of Count Gamba, wife of the Cavaliere Guiccioli, since known as Madame, or the Countess, Guiccioli,—all the children of persons of that rank in Italy bearing the title of their parents. The Conte Pietro, her brother, came in presently, also in a state of agitation, and having his arm in a sling. I then learned, that a quarrel having taken place

among the servants, the young Count had interfered, and been stabbed. He was very angry; Madame Guiccioli was more so, and would not hear of the charitable comments of Lord Byron, who was for making light of the matter. Indeed there was a look in the business a little formidable; for, though the stab was not much, the inflictor of it threatened more, and was at that minute keeping watch under the portico with the avowed intention of assaulting the first person that issued forth. I looked out of window, and met his eye glaring upwards like a tiger. The fellow had a red cap on like a sans-culotte, and a most sinister aspect, dreary and meagre, a proper caitiff. Thus, it appeared, the house was in a state of blockade; the nobility and gentry of the interior all kept in a state of impossibility by a rascally footman.

How long things had continued in this state I cannot say; but the hour was come when Lord Byron and his friends took their evening ride, and the thing was to be put an end to somehow. Fletcher, the valet, had been despatched for the police, and was not returned.

It was wondered among other things, how I had been suffered to enter the house with impunity. Somebody conceived, that the man might have taken me for one of the constituted authorities; a compliment which few Englishmen would be anxious to deserve, and which I must disclaim any pretensions to. At length we set out, Madame Guiccioli earnestly intreating "Bairon" to keep back, and all of us uniting to keep in advance of Conte Pietro, who was exasperated. It was a curious moment for a stranger from England. I fancied myself pitched into one of the scenes in the "Mysteries of Udolpho," with Montoni and his tumultuous companions. Every thing was new, foreign, and violent. There was the lady, flushed and dishevelled, exclaiming against the "*scelerato*;" the young Count, wounded and threatening; the assassin, waiting for us with his knife; and last, not least, in the novelty, my English friend, metamorphosed, round-looking, and jacketed, trying to damp all this fire with his cool tones, and an air of voluptuous indolence. He had now, however, put on his loose riding-coat of mazarin blue,

and his velvet cap, looking more lordly than before, but hardly less foreign. It was an awkward moment for him, not knowing what might happen; but he put a good face on the matter; and as to myself, I was so occupied with the novelty of the scene, that I had not time to be frightened. Forth we issue at the door, all squeezing to have the honour of being the boldest, when a termination is put to the tragedy by the vagabond's throwing himself on a bench, extending his arms, and bursting into tears. His cap was half over his eyes; his face gaunt, ugly, and unshaved; his appearance altogether more squalid and miserable than an Englishman would conceive it possible to find in such an establishment. This blessed figure reclined weeping and wailing, and asking pardon for his offence; and to crown all, he requested Lord Byron to kiss him.

The noble Lord conceived this excess of charity superfluous. He pardoned him, but said he must not think of remaining in his service; and the man continued weeping, and kissing his hand. I was then amused with seeing the footing on which the gentry and

their servants stand with each other in Italy, and the good-nature with which the fiercest exhibitions of anger can be followed up. Conte Pietro, a generous good-humoured fellow, accepted the man's hand, and shook it with great good-will; and Madame Guiccioli, though unable to subside so quickly from her state of indignant exaltation, looked in relenting sort, as if the pitying state of excitement would be just as good as the other. In fine, she concluded by according the man her grace also, seeing my Lord had forgiven him. The man was all penitence and wailing, but he was obliged to quit. The police would have forced him, if he had not been dismissed. He left the country, and called in his way on Mr. Shelley, who was shocked at his appearance, and gave him some money out of his very disgust; for he thought nobody would help such a fellow if he did not.

The unpleasant part of the business did not end here. It was, remotely, one of the causes of Lord Byron's leaving Italy; for it increased the awkwardness of his position with the Tuscan Government, and gave a farther unsteadi-

ness to his restless temper. His friends, the Gambas, who all lived with him, father as well as children, were already only upon sufferance in Tuscany. They had been expelled their native country, Romagna, for practices with the Carbonari; and Lord Byron, who identified himself with their fortunes, became a party to their wanderings, and to the footing on which they stood wherever they were permitted to abide. The Grand-duke's government had given him to understand, that they were at liberty to reside in Tuscany, provided as little was heard of them as possible. The *fracas* that happened in the street of Pisa, a little before I came, had given a shock to the tranquillity of this good understanding, Count Gamba's retinue having been the most violent persons concerned in it: and now, another of his men having caused a second disturbance, the distrust was completed. Lord Byron's residence in Tuscany was made uneasy to him. It was desired that he should separate himself from the Gambas: and though I believe, that even at that time, he would have been glad to do so; and though, on the other hand, it was

understood that a little courtesy on his part towards the Grand-duke and Duchess, the latter of whom was said to be particularly desirous of seeing him at Court, would have given him a *carte-blanche* for all parties, yet his pride in that instance, and his usual tendency to be led by those about him in the other, prevented his taking either of these steps; and he returned to his house at Pisa, only to reside there two or three months longer, when he departed for Genoa.

Having settled our friend, the lachrymose ruffian, we took our drive in the barouche, in the course of which we met the police-officer, and my old acquaintance Fletcher, with his good-humoured, lack-a-daisaical face. Fletcher was for being legitimate, and having his wife out to Italy. I had made an offer to the lady to bring her with us by sea, which she politely declined; doubtless, out of fear of the water: but I brought him a box full of goods, which consoled him a little. I fear I am getting a little gossiping here, beyond the record; such is the contamination of these personal histories; but Fletcher, having by nature an honest Eng-

lish face, the round simplicity of which no sophistication had yet succeeded in ruining, ladies of various ranks in Italy, Venetian countesses, and English cook-maids, had a trick of taking a liking to it; and the presence of Mrs. Fletcher might afterwards have saved me some trouble. This, however, is a bold conjecture. Perhaps it might have been worse. O Beaumont! hadst thou been living in the times of this the namesake of thy fellow-dramatist—but I am told here, that my apostrophes will be getting scandalous.

I returned to Leghorn; and, taking leave of our vessel, we put up at an hotel. Mr. Shelley then came to us from his *villeggiatura* at Lerici. His town abode, as well as Lord Byron's, was at Pisa. I will not dwell upon the moment. We talked of a thousand things, past, present, and to come. He was the same as ever, with the exception of less hope. He could not be otherwise. But he prepared me to find others not exactly what I had taken them for. I little thought at the time, how much reason I should have to remember his words.

Leghorn is a polite Wapping, with a square

and a theatre. The country around is uninteresting, when you become acquainted with it; but to a stranger, the realization of any thing he has read about is a delight, especially of such things as vines hanging from trees, and the sight of Apennines.

Mr. Shelley accompanied us from Leghorn to Pisa, in order to see us fixed in our new abode. Lord Byron left Monte-Nero at the same time, and joined us. We occupied the ground-floor of his Lordship's house, the Casa Lanfranchi, or the Lung' Arno. The remainder was inhabited by himself and the Gambas; but the father and son were then absent. Divided tenancies of this kind are common in Italy, where few houses are in possession of one family. It has been said that Lord Byron portioned off a part of his own dwelling, handsomely fitted it up for us, and heaped on us in this, as in other matters, a variety of benefactions. In the course of my narrative, I must qualify those agreeable fictions. In the first place, Lord Byron had never made use of the ground-floor. Formerly, it was not the custom to do so in great man-

sions, the splendour of the abode commencing up-stairs: nor is it now, where the house is occupied by only one family, and there is room for them without it; unless they descend for coolness in summer-time. Of late years, especially since the English have recommenced their visits, it is permitted to parlours to be respectable. In country-houses of a modern standing, I have seen them converted into the best part of the dwelling; but the old mansions were constructed to a different end; the retainers of the family, or the youngest branches, if it was very large, being the only persons who could with propriety live so near their mother earth. The grated windows that are seen in the ground-floors of most private houses in Italy, have survived the old periods of trouble that occasioned them; and it is doubtless to those periods that we must refer for the plebeianism of parlours.

The Casa Lanfranchi is said to have been built by Michael Angelo, and is worthy of him. It is in a bold and broad style throughout, with those harmonious graces of proportion which are sure to be found in an Italian

mansion. The outside is of rough marble. Lower down the Lung' Arno, on the same side of the way, is a mansion cased with polished marble. But I have written of these matters in another work. The furniture of our apartments was good and respectable, but of the plainest and cheapest description, consistent with that character. It was chosen by Mr. Shelley, who intended to beg my acceptance of it, and who knew, situated as he and I were, that in putting about us such furniture as he used himself, he could not pay us a handsomer or more welcome compliment. When the apartments were fitted up, Lord Byron insisted upon making us a present of the goods himself. Mr. Shelley did not choose to contest the point. He explained the circumstance to me; and this is the amount of the splendour with which some persons have been pleased to surround me at his Lordship's expense. I will here mention what I have happened to omit respecting another and greater matter. Two hundred pounds were sent me from Italy, to enable me to leave England with comfort. They came from Lord Byron,

and nothing was said to me of security, or any thing like it. Lord Byron had offered a year or two before, through Mr. Shelley, to send me four hundred pounds for a similar purpose, which offer I declined. I now accepted the two hundred pounds; but I found afterwards that his Lordship had had a bond for the money from Mr. Shelley. I make no comment on these things. I merely state the truth, because others have mis-stated it, and because I begin to be sick of maintaining a silence, which does no good to others, and is only turned against one's self.

We had not been in the house above an hour or two, when my friend brought the celebrated surgeon, Vaccà, to see Mrs. Hunt. He had a pleasing intelligent face, and was the most gentlemanlike Italian I ever saw. Vaccà pronounced his patient to be in a decline: and little hope was given us by others that she would survive beyond the year. She is now alive, and likely to live many years; and Vaccà is dead. I do not say this to his disparagement; for he was very skilful, and deserved his celebrity. But it appears to me, from more than

one remarkable instance, that there is a superstition about what are called declines and consumptions, from which the most eminent of the profession are not free. I suspect, that people of this tendency, with a proper mode of living, may reach to as good a period of existence as any other. The great secret in this as in all other cases, and indeed in almost all moral as well as physical cases of ill, is in diet. If some demi-god could regulate for mankind what they should eat and drink, he would put an end, at one stroke, to half the troubles which the world undergo, some of the most romantic sorrows with which they flatter themselves not excepted. It is by not exceeding in this point, and by keeping natural hours, that such nations as the Persians are enabled to be cheerful, even under a load of despotism; while others, among the freest on earth, are proverbial for spleen and melancholy. Our countrymen, manly as they are, effeminately bewail the same climate, which the gypsy, with his ruddy cheek, laughs at. But one change is linked with another; there must be more leisure and other comforts to stand people instead of

these ticklings and crammings of their despair; and the vanity of old patchwork endurance is loth to see any thing but vanity in the work of reformation.

The next day, while in the drawing-room with Lord Byron, I had a curious specimen of Italian manners. It was like a scene in an opera. One of his servants, a young man, suddenly came in smiling, and was followed by his sister, a handsome brunette, in a bodice and sleeves, and her own hair. She advanced to his Lordship to welcome him back to Pisa, and present him with a basket of flowers. In doing this, she took his hand and kissed it; then turned to the stranger, and kissed his hand also. I thought it a very becoming, unbecoming action; and that at least it should have been acknowledged by a kiss of another description; and the girl appeared to be of the same opinion, at least with regard to one of us, who stood blushing and looking in her eyes, and not knowing well what to be at. I thought we ought to have struck up a quartett. But there might have ensued a quintett, not so harmonious; and the scene was hastily concluded.

It is the custom in Italy, as it was in England, for inferiors to kiss your hand in coming and going. There is an air of good-will in it that is agreeable; but the implied sense of inferiority is not so pleasant. Servants have a better custom of wishing you a good evening when they bring in lights. To this you may respond in like manner; after which it seems impossible for the sun to "go down on the wrath," if there is any, of either party.

In a day or two Mr. Shelley took leave of us to return to Lerici for the rest of the season, meaning, however, to see us more than once in the interval. I spent one delightful afternoon with him, wandering about Pisa, and visiting the cathedral. On the night of the same day, he took a post-chaise for Leghorn, intending next morning to sign his will in that city, and then depart with his friend Captain Williams for Lerici. I earnestly entreated him, if the weather was violent, not to give way to his daring spirit, and venture to sea. He promised me he would not; and it seems that he did set off later than he otherwise would have done, and apparently at a more favourable moment. I

never beheld him more. The superstitious might discern something strange in that connexion of his last will and testament with his departure; but the will, it seems, was not to be found. The same night there was a tremendous storm of thunder and lightning, which made us very anxious; but we hoped our friend had arrived before then. When Mr. Trelawney came to Pisa, and told us he was missing, I underwent one of the sensations which we read of in books, but seldom experience: I was tongue-tied with horror. The rest is told in another part of the work; and I may be spared dwelling on the subject. From that time Italy was a black place to me.

Lord Byron requested me to look upon him as standing in Mr. Shelley's place, and said that I should find him the same friend that the other had been. My heart died within me to hear him: I made the proper acknowledgment; but I knew what he meant, and I more than doubted whether even in that, the most trivial part of friendship, he could resemble Mr. Shelley if he would. Circumstances unfortunately rendered the matter of too much import-

ance to me at the moment. I had reason to fear:—I was compelled to try:—and things turned out as I dreaded. The public have been given to understand that Lord Byron's purse was at my command, and that I used it according to the spirit with which it was offered. *I did so.* Stern necessity, and a large family, compelled me; and during our residence at Pisa, I had from him, or rather from his steward, to whom he always sent me for the money, and who doled it out to me as if my disgraces were being counted, the sum of seventy pounds. This sum, together with the payment of our expenses when we accompanied him from Pisa to Genoa, and thirty pounds with which he enabled us subsequently to go from Genoa to Florence, was all the money I ever received from Lord Byron, exclusive of the two hundred pounds in the first instance, which he made a debt of Mr. Shelley's by taking his bond. I have some peculiar notions on the subject of money, as the reader will see more fully. They will be found to involve considerable difference of opinion with the community in a state of things like the pre-

sent, particularly in a commercial country; and many may think me as deficient in spirit on that point, as I think them mistaken in their notions of what spirit is, and mistakenly educated. I may be wrong (as people say when they think themselves in the right), but in the mean time, judging even by what they themselves think of the little happiness and disinterestedness that is to be found in the present state of things, I am sure they are not right; and that the system of mere bustle and competition ends in little good to any body. I can see an improvement in it ultimately, when the vicissitude comes which every body attributes to the nature of human society, and which nobody seems to believe in with regard to their own customs:—but I shall be digressing too far. Among other things, in which I differ in point of theory (for in practice I am bound to say that of late, though for other reasons, I have totally altered in this particular), I have not had that horror of being under obligation, which is thought an essential refinement in money matters, and which leads some really generous persons, as well as some

who only seek personal importance in their generosity, to think they have a right to bestow favours which they would be mortified to receive. But at the same time in this as in every thing else, "the same is not the same." Men and modes make a difference: and I must say two things for myself, for which every body may give me credit, who deserves credit himself; first, that although (to my great sorrow and repentance) I have not been careful enough to enable myself to be generous in this respect towards others, in any degree worth speaking of, nor even (with shame I say it) just to my own children (though I trust to outlive that culpability), yet I have never refused to share my last sixpence (no idle phrase in this instance) with any friend who was in want of it; and second, that although it has been a delight to me to receive hundreds from some, I could not receive without anguish as many pence from others; nor should I ever, by any chance have applied to them, but for a combination of circumstances that mixed me up with them at the moment. I do not mean to say that Lord Byron was above receiving obligations.

I know not how it might have been with respect to large ones, and before all the world. Perhaps he was never reduced to the necessity of making the experiment. But he could receive some very strange and small ones, such as made people wonder over their wine; and he could put himself to, at least, a disadvantage in larger matters, usually supposed to be reciprocal, which made them wonder still more. If I am thought here to touch upon very private and delicate things, especially regarding a person who is no more, I must offer three more remarks to the consideration of those, and those only, whom I have just appealed to; I mean, such as being speakers of truth themselves, have an instinct in discovering those that resemble them. The first is, that Lord Byron made no scruple of talking very freely of me and mine; second, that in consequence of this freedom, as well as from the gratuitous talking of those who knew nothing about the matter, very erroneous conclusions have been drawn about us on more than one point; and third, that it is a principle with me never to give others to understand

any thing against an acquaintance, not only which I would not give, but which I *have* not given himself to understand; a principle, to which this book will have furnished no exception.* It may be judged by this, how little I have been in the habit of speaking against any body, and what a nuisance it is to me to do it now.

There was another thing that startled me in the Casa Lanfranchi. I had been led to consider the connexion between Lord Byron and Madame Guiccioli as more than warranted by Italian manners. Her husband was old enough to be her father. Every body knows how shamefully matches of this kind are permitted to take place, even in England. But in Italy, they are often accompanied, and almost always followed, by compromises of a very singular description, of which nobody thinks ill; and in fine, I had been given to understand that

* If it might appear otherwise with regard to Mr. Moore, whom I have never seen or corresponded with since his efforts against the Liberal, he has not been the less aware of the feelings entertained on the subject by myself and others.

the attachment was real; that it was rescuing Lord Byron from worse connexions; and that the lady's family (which was true) approved it. I was not prepared to find the father and brother living in the same house; but taking the national matters into consideration, and differing very considerably with the notions entertained respecting the intercourse of the sexes in more countries than one, I was prepared to treat with respect what I conceived to be founded in serious feelings; and saw, even in that arrangement, something which, though it startled my English habits at first, seemed to be a still farther warrant of innocence of intention, and exception to general rules. It is true, that when the Pope sanctioned her separation from her husband, he stipulated that she should live with her father; and as the separation took place on account of the connexion with Lord Byron, the nullification of the edict in thus adhering to the letter and violating the spirit of it, may have had an ill look in a Catholic country. But times are altered in that matter; and what enabled me the better to have a good opinion of the arrangement,

was the conclusion I came to respecting the dispositions of the old Count and his son, both very natural and amiable persons, with great simplicity of manners, and such a patriotic regard for their country, as had not only committed their reputation for wisdom in the eyes of the selfish, but got them into real trouble, and driven them into banishment. And I am of opinion to this day, that they considered their conduct in warranting the intimacy in question, not only to be justifiable but laudable; advantageous to the habits of a man, of whose acquaintance they felt proud; and perhaps even as making some amends to the lady, for the connexion which it superseded. The family came from Ravenna. The people in that quarter are more simple and unsophisticate than in the more frequented parts of Italy; worse perhaps where they are bad, that is to say, more gross and violent; but better (at least in the northern sense of the word) where they are good;—something more allied to the northern character and to the Germans. The women are apt to be fair, and to have fair tresses, as the lady in question had. The

men also are of lighter complexions than is usual in Italy. The old Count had the look of an English country gentleman, with a paternal gossiping manner, and apparently no sort of pride. The young one, who has since been known and esteemed in England, and is an enthusiast and active partizan in the cause of Greece, was equally pleasing in his manners, and evinced great interest in all that regarded the progress of freedom and knowledge. He would ask, with all the zest of an Englishman, what was doing by Lord Castlereagh and the House of Commons; and when I apologized to him for running on in my bad Italian; would reassure me with the best grace in the world, and say it was delightful to him to converse with me, for I gave him "*hope*." The Italians are very kind to bad speakers of their language, and ought to shame us in that matter. I confess, I can never hear a foreigner speak bad English without such a tendency to laugh as puts me to the torture; whereas I have never known an Italian's gravity disturbed by the most ludicrous mistakes, but in one instance, and then

it was the idea and not the word that discommoded him. I have known them even repeat your mistakes with an unconscious look, as if they were proper expressions. I remember walking once with my young acquaintance, Luigi Gianetti, of Pisa, all the way from Florence to Maiano, and holding a long ethical discourse on the superiority of the "good clever man" to the "bad clever man," in the course of which I must have uttered a thousand malapropisms, not one of which did he give me a sense of by a smile.

But to return to the Gambas. The way in which the connexion between the young Countess and Lord Byron had originated, and was sanctioned, was, I thought, clear enough; but unfortunately it soon became equally clear, that there was no real love on either side. The lady, I believe, was not unsusceptible of a real attachment, and most undoubtedly she was desirous that Lord Byron should cultivate it, and make her as proud and as affectionate as she was anxious to be. But to hear her talk of him, she must have pretty soon discerned, that this was impossible: and the manner of her

talking rendered it more than doubtful whether she had ever loved, or could love him, to the extent that she supposed. I believe she would have taken great pride in the noble Bard, if he would have let her; and remained a faithful and affectionate companion as long as he pleased to have her so; but this depended more on his treatment of her, and still more on the way in which he conducted himself towards others, than on any positive qualities of his own. On the other hand, he was alternately vexed and gratified by her jealousies. His regard being founded solely on her person, and not surviving in the shape of a considerate tenderness, had so degenerated in a short space of time, that if you were startled to hear the lady complain of him as she did, and that too with comparative strangers, you were shocked at the licence which he would allow his criticisms on her. The truth is, as I have said before, that he had never known any thing of love but the animal passion. His poetry had given this its gracefuller aspect, when young:—he could believe in the passion of Romeo and Juliet. But the moment he thought he had attained

to years of discretion, what with the help of bad companions, and a sense of his own merits for want of comparisons to check it, he had made the wise and blessed discovery, that women might love himself though he could not return the passion; and that all women's love, the very best of it, was nothing but vanity. To be able to love a quality for its own sake, exclusive of any reaction upon one's self-love, seemed a thing that never entered his head. If at any time, therefore, he ceased to love a woman's person, and found leisure to detect in her the vanities natural to a flattered beauty, he set no bounds to the light and coarse way in which he would speak of her. There was coarseness in the way in which he would talk to women, even when he was in his best humour with them. I do not mean on the side of voluptuousness, which is rather an excess than a coarseness; the latter being an impertinence, which is the reverse of the former. I have seen him call their attention to circumstances, which made you wish yourself a hundred miles off. They were connected with any thing but the graces with which a poet would encircle his

Venus. He said to me once of a friend of his, that he had been spoilt by reading Swift. He himself had certainly not escaped the infection.

What completed the distress of this connexion, with respect to the parties themselves, was his want of generosity in money-matters. The lady was independent of him, and disinterested; and he seemed resolved that she should have every mode but one, of proving that she could remain so. I will not repeat what was said and lamented on this subject. I would not say any thing about it, nor about twenty other matters, but that they hang together more or less, and are connected with the truth of a portrait which it has become necessary to me to paint. It is fortunate that there are some which I can omit. But I am of opinion that no woman could have loved him long. Pride in his celebrity, and the wish not to appear to have been mistaken or undervalued on their own parts, might have kept up an appearance of love, long after it had ceased; but the thing would have gone without doubt, and that very speedily. Love may be kept

up in spite of great defects, and even great offences,—offences too against itself. Lord Byron, out of a certain instinct, was fond of painting this in his poetry. But there are certain deficiencies, which by depriving a passion of the last resources of self-love necessary to every thing human, deny to it its last consolation,—that of taking pity on itself; and without this, it is not in nature that it should exist. Lord Byron painted his heroes criminal, wilful, even selfish in great things; but he took care not to paint them mean in little ones. He took care also to give them a great quantity of what he was singularly deficient in,—which was self-possession: for when it is added, that he had no address, even in the ordinary sense of the word,—that he hummed and hawed, and looked confused, on very trivial occasions,—that he could much more easily get into a dilemma than out of it, and with much greater skill wound the self-love of others than relieve them,—the most common-place believers in a poet's attractions will begin to suspect, that it is possible for his books to be the best part of him.

From the dilemma into which I thus found myself thrown, I was relieved by a very trivial circumstance. My wife knew nothing of Italian, and did not care to learn it. Madame Guiccioli could not speak English. They were subsequently introduced to one another during a chance meeting, but that was all. No proposition was made for an intimacy on either side, and the families remained separate. This, however, was perhaps the first local cause of the diminished cordiality of intercourse between Lord Byron and myself. He had been told, what was very true, that Mrs. Hunt, though living in all respects after the fashion of an English wife, was any thing but illiberal with regard to others; yet he saw her taking no steps for a farther intimacy. He learnt, what was equally true, that she was destitute, to a remarkable degree, of all care about rank and titles. She had been used to live in a world of her own, and was, and is, I really believe, absolutely unimpressible in that respect. It is possible, that her inexperience of any mode of life but her own, may have rendered her somewhat jealous in behalf of it, and not willing to be

brought into comparison with pretensions, the defects of which she is acute to discern; but her indifference to the nominal and conventional part of their importance is unaffectedly real; and it partakes of that sense of the ludicrous, which is so natural to persons to whom they are of no consequence, and so provoking to those who regard them otherwise. Finally, Lord Byron, who was as acute as a woman in those respects, very speedily discerned that he did not stand very high in her good graces; and accordingly he set her down to a very humble rank in his own. As I oftener went to his part of the house, than he came to mine, he seldom saw her; and when he did, the conversation was awkward on his side, and provokingly self-possessed on her's. He said to her one day, "What do you think, Mrs. Hunt? Trelawney has been speaking against my morals! What do you think of that!"—"It is the first time," said Mrs. Hunt, "I ever heard of them." This, which would have set a man of address upon his wit, completely dashed, and reduced him to silence. But her greatest offence was in something which I had occasion to tell

him. He was very bitter one day upon some friends of mine, criticising even their personal appearance, and that in no good taste. At the same time he was affecting to be very pleasant and good-humoured, and without any "offence in the world." All this provoked me to mortify him, and I asked if he knew what Mrs. Hunt had said one day to the Shelleys of his picture by Harlowe? (It is the fastidious, scornful portrait of him, affectedly looking down.) He said he did not, and was curious to know. An engraving of it, I told him, was shown her, and her opinion asked: upon which she observed, that it "resembled a great school-boy, who had had a plain bun given him, instead of a plum one." I did not add, that our friends shook with laughter at this idea of the noble original, because it was "so like him." He looked as blank as possible, and never again criticised the personal appearance of those whom I regarded. It was on accounts like these, that he talked of Mrs. Hunt as being "no great things." Myself, because I did not take all his worldly common-places for granted, nor enter into the merit of his bad jokes on women, he represented as

a "proser:" and the children, than whom, I will venture to say, it was impossible to have quieter or more respectable in the house, or any that came less in his way, he pronounced to be "impracticable." But that was the reason. I very soon found that it was desirable to keep them out of his way; and although this was done in the easiest and most natural manner, and was altogether such a measure as a person of less jealousy might have regarded as a consideration for his quiet, he resented it, and could not help venting his spleen in talking of them. The worst of it was, that when they did come in his way, they were nothing daunted. They had lived in a natural, not an artificial state of intercourse, and were equally sprightly, respectful, and self-possessed. My eldest boy surprised him with his address, never losing his singleness of manner, nor exhibiting pretensions of which he was too young to know any thing, yet giving him his title at due intervals, and appearing, in fact, as if he had always lived in the world instead of out of it. This put him out of his reckoning. To the second, who was more struck with his re-

putation, and had a vivacity of temperament that rendered such lessons dangerous, he said, one day, that he must take care how he got notions in his head about truth and sincerity, for they would hinder his getting on in the world. This, doubtless, was rather intended to vent a spleen of his own, than to modify the opinions of the child; but the peril was not the less, and I had warning given me that he could say worse things when I was not present. Thus the children became "impracticable;" and, luckily, they remained so.

One thing, among others in which he found myself impracticable, annoyed him exceedingly; so much so, that I would have given it up, and the rest too, if the change would not have done more harm than good. I the more readily speak of it, because it reminds me of something which I have omitted, and which I might reasonably be accused of omitting to my own advantage. While I was writing the "Story of Rimini," Lord Byron saw the manuscript from time to time, and made his remarks upon it. He spoke also to Murray respecting the publication. Murray

was of an opposite side in politics both to the noble Lord and myself; but he was glad to publish with his Lordship, for considerations which he found not incompatible with his political philosophy; and he said that he was willing to publish for me, out of a sense of liberality and fair dealing. A friend of mine had told me, as an instance of his superiority to mere party views, that he piqued himself upon a "Life of Napoleon" which he was about to publish, and which was to be very impartial. In short, Murray had himself importuned me some years before to write for "The Quarterly Review." I will not swear, that in putting the "Story of Rimini" into his hands, I had not something of an instinctive sense that I was securing myself against the more violent hostilities of that review. I will not swear this, because there is always something in the "last recesses of the mind," of which spectators may be better judges than ourselves. But Mr. Hazlitt, with his extra-subtleties, was out, when he thought I put Mr. Gifford's epitaph on his servant into "The Examiner," with a view to that end. The coinci-

dence was curious, I admit; but it was nothing more. The epitaph was sent me, as things favourable to others of the opposite party had been sent me before, with a recommendation of it to my attention, and a plain hint, that my credit for impartiality was concerned in the manner in which I should treat it. It is well known, and has been sometimes lamented (by Mr. Hazlitt among others), that the liberal side of politics piqued itself upon the greater degree of generosity with which it could afford to speak of its enemies, and do justice to what it thought meritorious in them. I may add, that "The Examiner" was foremost in the display of this piece of knight-errantry: that it always spoke of Napoleon as a great man, though it held him up as a betrayer of the cause of freedom; that it was among the foremost to hail Sir Walter Scott as a novelist, though it thought little of him as a poet, and scornfully as a politician; and that at one time it was almost exclusive as a journal, in its admiration of the poetical genius of Wordsworth, of whom it nevertheless felt ashamed as a renegado. Lord Byron used to accuse me of making a diver-

sion on the town in favour of Wordsworth; and I have reason to believe, that the poet himself was not without an opinion to the same effect. All I mean to say is, that had the epitaph written by Mr. Gifford come before me at any time, it would have met with the same reception, because I thought well of it. That I was not sorry at the coincidence (which is possible) I cannot pretend to acknowledge, because I have no recollection of the kind; but I confess, that had I known as much of the impulses of weak men at that time as I do now, I would not have incurred, by publishing the epitaph, a greater portion of malignity, than the review was at all events prepared to assail me with. My opinion of Murray's conduct is, that he was glad of the opportunity of showing his impartiality so far with regard to *one* of his publications, as to allow his review to cut it up; and I can easily enough imagine, that Gifford, or whoever the poor fellow was that did cut it up, was the more delighted with his task, in proportion to the sense which he supposed me to entertain of his power. Lord Byron perhaps may have

felt piqued at the review on his own account. I forget whether he ever alluded to it. I think not. He condescended, among his other timid deferences to "the town," to be afraid of Gifford. There was an interchange of flatteries between them, not the less subtle for Gifford's occasionally affecting a paternal tone of remonstrance; and they were "friends" to the last; though Lord Byron, (to say nothing of that being a reason also) could not help giving him a secret hit now and then, when the church-and-state review became shy of him. Gifford thought him a wonderful young man, but wild, &c.; and he never forgot that he was a lord. He least of all forgot it, when he affected to play the schoolmaster. On the other hand, Lord Byron was happy to regard Mr. Gifford as a wonderful old gentleman, not indeed a born gentleman, but the more honest in his patricianisms on that account, and quite a born critic; "sound," as the saying is; learned and all that, and full of "good sense:" in short, one that was very sensible of his Lordship's merits, both as a poet and a peer, and who had the

art of making his homage to a man of rank agreeable, by affecting independence without really feeling it. Murray he laughed at. He treated him afterwards, as he did most others, with strange alternations of spleen and good humour, of open panegyric and secret ridicule; but at the period in question, he at least thought him an honest man—for "*the tribe of Barabbas*;" who, said his Lordship, "was unquestionably a bookseller." Murray affected to patronize him; and with a simplicity worthy of Dominie Sampson, lamented that a young man with such advantages should go counter in opinion to the King and his ministers; otherwise, said he, who knows but what he might have been made a Viscount, "or even an Earl!"* Mr. Murray once did me the honour, in a stage-coach, to make a similar lamentation with regard to myself, all of course in due proportion to my rank and pretensions: but, said he, "there is Leigh Hunt:—what does he mean by writing on the side of reform and that kind of thing? what a pity he did

* I quote on the authority of a Quarterly Reviewer.

not come to us! he might have made his fortune." "Oh but," said a person present, who happened to know me, "his principles were against it." "Principles!" exclaimed Mr. Murray, foregoing his character of Dominie Sampson, and with all the airs of a courtier; "Principles!" as if he had never heard of such things.

The courtiers had the advantage of me in one particular. They knew what it was to admire lords heartily, and they could see that I admired them more than I suspected. I dedicated the "Story of Rimini" to Lord Byron, and the dedication was a foolish one. I addressed him, as at the beginning of a letter, and as custom allows in private between friends, without his title; and I proceeded to show how much I thought of his rank, by pretending to think nothing about it. My critics were right so far; but they were wrong in thinking that I would have done it to every lord, and that very romantic feelings were not mixed up with this very childish mistake. I had declined, out of a notion of principle, to avail myself of more than one opportunity of being intimate with men of rank; opportunities which, it will

easily be conceived, are no very uncommon things in the life of a journalist. I confess I valued myself a little suspiciously upon my self-denial. In one instance I had reason to do so, for I missed the company of a man of talents. But talents, poetry, similarity of political opinion, the flattery of early sympathy with my boyish writings, more flattering offers of friendship, and the last climax of flattery, an earnest waiving of his rank, were too much for me in the person of Lord Byron; and I took out, with my new friend as I thought him, hearty payment for my philosophical abstinence. Now was the time, I thought, to show, that friendship, and talents, and poetry, were reckoned superior to rank, even by rank itself; my friend appeared not only to allow me to think so, but to encourage me to do it. I took him at his word; and I believe he was as much astonished at it (though nobody could have expressed himself more kindly to me on the subject*), as at this present writing I am mortified to record it.

I discovered the absurdity I had committed,

* See the Correspondence.

long before I went to Italy. On renewing my intercourse with Lord Byron, I made up my mind to put myself on a different footing with him, but in such a manner as he should construe handsomely towards himself, as well as respectfully towards me. I reckoned upon his approval of it, because it should be done as a matter of course, and as the result of a little more experience of the world, and not out of any particular observation of his own wishes or inconsistencies: and I reckoned upon it the more confidently, because at the time that I formed the resolution, his own personal character was not so much in my thoughts as that conventional modification of it which he inherited in common with others of his rank, and of which it was not to be expected he should get rid. Men do not easily give up any advantages they possess, real or imaginary; and they have a good deal to say in their favour,—I mean, as far as any real difference is concerned between what is tangible in substance and tangible in the apprehension. If a man can be made happy with a title, I do not know why we should begrudge it him, or

why he should think ill of it, any more than of beauty, or riches, or any thing else that has an influence upon the imagination. The only questions are, whether he will be the better for it in the long run; and whether his particular good is harmless or otherwise with respect to the many. Without stopping to settle this point, I had concluded that Lord Byron had naturally as much regard for his title as any other nobleman; perhaps more, because he had professed not to care about it. Besides, he had a poetical imagination. Mr. Shelley, who, though he had not known him longer, had known him more intimately, was punctilious in giving him his title, and told me very plainly that he thought it best for all parties. His oldest acquaintances, it is true, behaved in this respect, as it is the custom to behave in great familiarity of intercourse. Mr. Shelley did not choose to be so familiar; and he thought, that although I had acted differently in former times, a long suspension of intercourse would give farther warrant to a change, desirable on many accounts, quite unaffected, and intended to be acceptable. I took care, accordingly, not

to accompany my new punctilio with any air of study or gravity. In every other respect things appeared the same as before. We laughed, and chatted, and rode out, and were as familiar as need be; and I thought he regarded the matter just as I wished. However, he did not like it.

This may require some explanation. Lord Byron was very proud of his rank. M. Beyle (" Count Stendhal"), when he saw him at the opera in Venice, made this discovery at a glance; and it was a discovery no less subtle than true. He would appear sometimes as jealous of his title, as if he had usurped it. A friend told me, that an Italian apothecary having sent him one day a packet of medicines, addressed to " Mons. Byron," this mock-heroic mistake aroused his indignation, and he sent back the physic to learn better manners. His coat of arms was fixed up in front of his bed. I have heard that it was a joke with him to mystify the sense of the motto to his fair friend, who wished particularly to know what " Crede Byron" meant. The motto, it must be acknowledged, was awkward. The version,

to which her Italian helped her, was too provocative of comment to be allowed. There are mottoes, as well as scutcheons, of pretence, which must often occasion the bearers much taunt and sarcasm, especially from indignant ladies. Custom, indeed, and the interested acquiescence of society, enable us to be proud of imputed merits, though we contradict them every day of our life: otherwise it would be wonderful how people could adorn their equipages, and be continually sealing their letters with maxims and stately moralities, ludicrously inapplicable. It would be like wearing ironical papers in their hats.

But Lord Byron, besides being a lord, was a man of letters, and he was extremely desirous of the approbation of men of letters. He loved to enjoy the privileges of his rank, and at the same time to be thought above them. It is true, if he thought you not above them yourself, he was the better pleased. On this account among others, no man was calculated to delight him in a higher degree than Thomas Moore; who with every charm he wished for in a companion, and a reputation for independence and liberal opinion,

admired both genius and title for their own sakes. But his Lordship did not always feel quite secure of the bon-mots of his brother wit. His conscience had taught him suspicion; and it was a fault with him and his *côterie*, as it is with most, that they all talked too much of one another behind their backs. But "admiration at all events" was his real motto. If he thought you an admirer of titles, he was well pleased that you should add that homage to the other, without investigating it too nicely. If not, he was anxious that you should not suppose him anxious about the matter. When he beheld me, therefore, in the first instance, taking such pains to show my philosophy, he knew very well that he was secure, address him as I might; but now that he found me grown older, and suspected from my general opinions and way of life, that my experience, though it adopted the style of the world when mixing with it, partook less of it than ever in some respects, he was chagrined at this change in my appellatives. He did not feel so at once; but the more we associated, and the

greater insight he obtained into the tranquil and unaffected conclusions I had come to on a great many points, upon which he was desirous of being thought as indifferent as myself, the less satisfied he became with it. At last, thinking I had ceased to esteem him, he petulantly bantered me on the subject. I knew, in fact, that under all the circumstances, neither of us could afford a change back again to the old entire familiarity; he, because he would have regarded it as a triumph warranting very peculiar consequences, and such as would by no means have saved me from the penalties of the previous offence; and I, because I was under certain disadvantages, that would not allow me to indulge him. With any other man, I would not have stood it out. It would have ill become the very sincerity of my feelings. But even the genius of Lord Byron did not enable him to afford being conceded to. He was so annoyed one day at Genoa at not succeeding in bantering me out of my epistolary proprieties, that he addressed me a letter beginning, "Dear Lord Hunt." This

sally made me laugh heartily. I told him so; and my unequivocal relish of the joke pacified him; so that I heard no more on the subject.

The familiarities of my noble acquaintance, which I had taken at first for a compliment and a cordiality, were dealt out in equal portions to all who came near him. They proceeded upon that royal instinct of an immeasurable distance between the parties, the safety of which, it is thought, can be compromised by no appearance of encouragement. The farther you are off, the more securely the personage may indulge your good opinion of him. The greater his merits, and the more transporting his condescension, the less can you be so immodest as to have pretensions of your own. You may be intoxicated into familiarity. That is excusable, though not desirable. But not to be intoxicated any how,—not to show any levity, and yet not to be possessed with a seriousness of the pleasure, is an offence. When I agreed to go to Italy and join in setting up the proposed work, Shelley, who was fond of giving his friends appellations, happened to be

talking one day with Lord Byron of the mystification which the name of "Leigh Hunt" would cause the Italians; and passing from one fancy to another, he proposed that they should translate it into Leontius. Lord Byron approved of this conceit, and at Pisa was in the habit of calling me so. I liked it; especially as it seemed a kind of new link with my beloved friend, then, alas! no more. I was pleased to be called in Italy, what he would have called me there had he been alive: and the familiarity was welcome to me from Lord Byron's mouth, partly because it pleased himself, partly because it was not of a worldly fashion, and the link with my friend was thus rendered compatible. In fact, had Lord Byron been what I used to think him, he might have called me what he chose; and I should have been as proud to be at his call, as I endeavoured to be pleased. As it was, there was something not unsocial nor even unenjoying in our intercourse, nor was there any appearance of constraint; but, upon the whole, it was not pleasant: it was not cordial. There was a sense

of mistake on both sides. However, this came by degrees. At first there was hope, which I tried hard to indulge; and there was always some joking going forward; some melancholy mirth, which a spectator might have taken for pleasure.

Our manner of life was this. Lord Byron, who used to sit up at night, writing Don Juan (which he did under the influence of gin and water), rose late in the morning. He breakfasted; read; lounged about, singing an air, generally out of Rossini, and in a swaggering style, though in a voice at once small and veiled; then took a bath, and was dressed; and coming down-stairs, was heard, still singing, in the court-yard, out of which the garden ascended at the back of the house. The servants at the same time brought out two or three chairs. My study, a little room in a corner, with an orange-tree peeping in at the window, looked upon this court-yard. I was generally at my writing when he came down, and either acknowledged his presence by getting up and saying something from the window, or he called out "Leontius!" and came halting up

to the window with some joke, or other challenge to conversation. (Readers of good sense will do me the justice of discerning where any thing is spoken of in a tone of objection, and where it is only brought in as requisite to the truth of the picture.) His dress, as at Monte-Nero, was a nankin jacket, with white waistcoat and trowsers, and a cap, either velvet or linen, with a shade to it. In his hand was a tobacco-box, from which he helped himself like unto a shipman, but for a different purpose; his object being to restrain the pinguifying impulses of hunger. Perhaps also he thought it good for the teeth. We then lounged about, or sat and talked, Madame Guiccioli with her sleek tresses descending after her toilet to join us. The garden was small and square, but plentifully stocked with oranges and other shrubs; and, being well watered, looked very green and refreshing under the Italian sky. The lady generally attracted us up into it, if we had not been there before. Her appearance might have reminded an English spectator of Chaucer's heroine—

> " Yclothed was she, fresh for to devise.
> Her yellow hair was braided in a tress
> Behind her back, a yardè long, I guess :
> And in the garden (as the sun uprist)
> She walketh up and down, where as her list :"

And then, as Dryden has it :

> " At every turn she made a little stand,
> And thrust among the thorns her lily hand."

Madame Guiccioli, who was at that time about twenty, was handsome and lady-like, with an agreeable manner, and a voice not partaking too much of the Italian fervour to be gentle. She had just enough of it to give her speaking a grace. None of her graces appeared entirely free from art; nor, on the other hand, did they betray enough of it to give you an ill opinion of her sincerity and good-humour. I was told, that her Romagnese dialect was observable; but to me, at that time, all Italian in a lady's mouth was Tuscan pearl; and she trolled it over her lip, pure or not, with that sort of conscious grace, which seems to belong to the Italian language as a matter of right. I amused her with speaking bad Italian out of Ariosto, and saying *speme* for *speranza;* in which she good-

THE COUNTESS GUICCIOLI.

Engraved by H. Meyer, from a sketch by Dante Panario

Published by Henry Colburn, London, 1828.

naturedly found something pleasant and *pellegrino;* keeping all the while that considerate countenance, for which a foreigner has so much reason to be grateful. Her hair was what the poet has described, or rather *blond,* with an inclination to yellow; a very fair and delicate yellow at all events, and within the limits of the poetical. She had regular features, of the order properly called handsome, in distinction to prettiness or to piquancy; being well proportioned to one another, large rather than otherwise, but without coarseness, and more harmonious than interesting. Her nose was the handsomest of the kind I ever saw; and I have known her both smile very sweetly, and look intelligently, when Lord Byron has said something kind to her. I should not say, however, that she was a very intelligent person. Both her wisdom and her want of wisdom were on the side of her feelings, in which there was doubtless mingled a good deal of the self-love natural to a flattered beauty. She wrote letters in the style of the "Academy of Compliments;" and made plentiful use, at all times, of those substitutes for address and discourse, which flourished in

England at the era of that polite compilation, and are still in full bloom in Italy.

> " And evermore
> She strewed a *mi rallegro* after and before."

In a word, Madame Guiccioli was a kind of buxom parlour-boarder, compressing herself artificially into dignity and elegance, and fancying she walked, in the eyes of the whole world, a heroine by the side of a poet. When I saw her at Monte-Nero, she was in a state of excitement and exaltation, and had really something of this look. At that time also she looked no older than she was; in which respect a rapid and very singular change took place, to the surprise of every body. In the course of a few months she seemed to have lived as many years. It was most likely in that interval that she discovered she had no real hold on the affections of her companion. The portrait of her by Mr. West,

> " In Magdalen's loose hair and lifted eye,"

is flattering upon the whole; has a look of greater delicacy than she possessed; but it is also very like, and the studied pretension of the attitude has a moral resemblance. Being

a half-length, it shows her to advantage; for the fault of her person was, that her head and bust were hardly sustained by limbs of sufficient length. I take her to have been a good-hearted zealous person, capable of being very natural if she had been thrown into natural circumstances, and able to show a companion, whom she was proud of, that good-humoured and grateful attachment, which the most brilliant men, if they were wise enough, would be as happy to secure, as a corner in Elysium. But the greater and more selfish the vanity, the less will it tolerate the smallest portion of it in another. Lord Byron saw, in the attachment of any female, nothing but what the whole sex were prepared to entertain for him; and instead of allowing himself to love and be beloved for the qualities which can only be realized upon intimacy, and which are the only securers at last of all attachment, whether for the illustrious or the obscure, he gave up his comfort, out of a wretched compliment to his self-love. He enabled this adoring sex to discover, that a great man might be a very small one. It must be owned, however, as

the reader will see presently, that Madame Guiccioli did not in the least know how to manage him, when he was wrong.

The effect of these and the other faults in his Lordship's character was similar, in its proportion, upon all who chanced to come within his sphere. Let the reader present to his imagination the noble poet and any intimate acquaintance (not a mere man of the world) living together. He must fancy them, by very speedy degrees, doubting and differing with one another, how quietly soever, and producing such a painful sense of something not to be esteemed on one side, and something tormented between the wish not to show it and the impossibility of not feeling it on the other, that separation becomes inevitable. It has been said in a magazine, that I was always arguing with Lord Byron. Nothing can be more untrue. I was indeed almost always differing, and to such a degree, that I was fain to keep the difference to myself. I differed so much, that I argued as little as possible. His Lordship was so poor a logician, that he did not even provoke argument. When you

openly differed with him, in any thing like a zealous manner, the provocation was caused by something foreign to reasoning, and not pretending to it. He did not care for argument, and, what is worse, was too easily convinced at the moment, or appeared to be so, to give any zest to disputation. He gravely asked me one day, "What it was that convinced me in argument?" I said, I thought I was convinced by the strongest reasoning. "For my part," said he, "it is the last speaker that convinces me." And I believe he spoke truly; but then he was only convinced, till it was agreeable to him to be moved otherwise. He did not care for the truth. He admired only the convenient and the ornamental. He was moved to and fro, not because there was any ultimate purpose which he would give up, but solely because it was most troublesome to him to sit still and resist. "Mobility," he has said, in one of his notes to "Don Juan," was his weakness; and he calls it "a very painful attribute." It is an attribute certainly not very godlike; but it still left him as self-centered and unsympathising with his movers, as if he

had been a statue or a ball. In this respect he was as *totus teres atque rotundus*, as Mr. Hazlitt could desire; and thus it was, that he was rolled out of Mr. Hazlitt's own company and the Liberal.

I shall come to that matter presently. Meanwhile, to return to our mode of life. In the course of an hour or two, being an early riser, I used to go in to dinner. Lord Byron either stayed a little longer, or went up stairs to his books and his couch. When the heat of the day declined, we rode out, either on horseback or in a barouche, generally towards the forest. He was a good rider, graceful, and kept a firm seat. He loved to be told of it; and being true, it was a pleasure to tell him. Good God! what homage might not that man have received, and what love and pleasure reciprocated, if he could have been content with the truth, and had truth enough of his own to think a little better of his fellow-creatures! But he was always seeking for uneasy sources of satisfaction. The first day we were going out on horseback together, he was joking upon the bad riding of this and that acquaintance of

his. He evidently hoped to have the pleasure of adding me to the list; and finding, when we pushed forward, that there was nothing particular in the spectacle of my horsemanship, he said in a tone of disappointment, "Why, Hunt, you ride very well!" Trelawney sometimes went with us, on a great horse, smoking a cigar. We had blue frock-coats, white waistcoats and trowsers, and velvet caps *à la Raphael;* and cut a gallant figure. Sometimes we went as far as a vineyard, where he had been accustomed to shoot at a mark, and where the brunette lived, who came into his drawing-room with the basket of flowers. The father was an honest-looking man, who was in trouble with his landlord, and heaved great sighs; the mother a loud swarthy woman, with hard lines in her face. There was a little sister, delicate-looking and melancholy, very different from the confident though not unpleasing countenance of the elder, who was more handsome. They all, however, seemed good-humoured. We sat under an arbour, and had figs served up to us, the mother being loud in our faces, and cutting some extraordinary jokes, which

made me any thing but merry. Upon the whole, I was glad to come away.

Madame Guiccioli was very curious on these occasions, but could get no information. Unfortunately, she could not see beyond a commonplace of any sort, nor put up with a distressing one in the hope of doing it away. The worst thing she did (and which showed to every body else, though not to herself, that she entertained no real love for Lord Byron) was to indulge in vehement complaints of him to his acquaintances. The first time she did so to me, I shocked her so excessively with endeavouring to pay a compliment to her understanding, and leading her into a more generous policy, that she never made me her confidant again. "No wonder," she said, "that my Lord was so bad, when he had friends who could talk so shockingly." "Oh, Shelley!" thought I, "see what your friend has come to with the sentimental Italian whom he was to assist in reforming our Don Juan!" When Lord Byron talked freely to her before others, she was not affected by what would have startled a delicate Englishwoman, (a com-

mon Italian defect), but when he alluded to any thing more pardonable, she would get angry, and remonstrate, and "wonder at him;" he all the while looking as if he enjoyed her vehemence, and did not believe a word of it. A delicate lover would have spared her this, and at the same time have elevated her notions of the behaviour suitable for such occasions; but her own understanding did not inform her any better; and in this respect I doubt whether Lord Byron's could have supplied it; what is called sentiment having been so completely taken out of him by ill company and the world.

Of an evening I seldom saw him. He recreated himself in the balcony, or with a book; and at night, when I went to bed, he was just thinking of setting to work with Don Juan. His favourite reading was history and travels. I think I am correct in saying that his favourite authors were Bayle and Gibbon. Gibbon was altogether a writer calculated to please him. There was a show in him, and at the same time a tone of the world, a self-complacency and a sarcasm, a love of things aristocratical, with a tendency to be liberal on other

points of opinion, and to crown all, a splendid success in authorship, and a high and piquant character with the fashionable world, which found a strong sympathy in the bosom of his noble reader. Then, in his private life, Gibbon was a voluptuous recluse; he had given celebrity to a foreign residence, possessed a due sense of the merits of wealth as well as rank, and last, perhaps not least, was no speaker in Parliament. I may add, that the elaborate style of his writing pleased the lover of the artificial in poetry, while the cynical turn of his satire amused the genius of Don Juan. And finally, his learning and research supplied the indolent man of letters with the information which he had left at school.

Lord Byron's collection of books was poor, and consisted chiefly of new ones. I remember little among them but the English works published at Basle, (Kames, Robertson, Watson's History of Philip II. &c.) and new ones occasionally sent him from England. He was anxious to show you that he possessed no Shakspeare and Milton; "because," he said, "he had been accused of borrowing from them!"

He affected to doubt whether Shakspeare was so great a genius as he has been taken for, and whether fashion had not a great deal to do with it; an extravagance, of which none but a patrician author could have been guilty. However, there was a greater committal of himself at the bottom of this notion than he supposed; and, perhaps, circumstances had really disenabled him from having the *proper* idea of Shakspeare, though it could not have fallen so short of the truth as he pretended. Spenser he could not read; at least he said so. All the gusto of that most poetical of the poets went with him for nothing. I lent him a volume of the "Fairy Queen," and he said he would try to like it. Next day he brought it to my study-window, and said, "Here, Hunt, here is your Spenser. I cannot see any thing in him:" and he seemed anxious that I should take it out of his hands, as if he was afraid of being accused of copying so poor a writer. That he saw nothing in Spenser is not very likely; but I really do not think that he saw much. Spenser was too much out of the world, and he too much in it. It would have

been impossible to persuade him, that Sandys's Ovid was better than Addison's and Croxall's. He wanted faith in the interior of poetry, to relish it, unpruned and unpopular. Besides, he himself was to be mixed up somehow with every thing, whether to approve it or disapprove. When he found Sandys's "Ovid" among my books, he said, "God! what an unpleasant recollection I have of this book! I met with it on my wedding-day; I read it while I was waiting to go to church." Sandys, who is any thing but an anti-bridal poet, was thenceforward to be nobody but an old fellow who had given him an unpleasant sensation. The only great writer of past times, whom he read with avowed satisfaction, was Montaigne, as the reader may see by an article in the "New Monthly Magazine." In the same article may be seen the reasons why, and the passages that he marked in that author. Franklin he liked. He respected him for his acquisition of wealth and power; and would have stood in awe, had he known him, of the refined worldliness of his character, and the influence it gave him. Franklin's Works, and

Walter Scott's, were among his favourite reading. His liking for such of the modern authors as he preferred in general, was not founded in a compliment to them; but Walter Scott, with his novels, his fashionable repute, and his ill opinion of the world whom he fell in with, enabled him to enter heartily into his merits; and he read him over and over again with unaffected delight. Sir Walter was his correspondent, and appears to have returned the regard; though, if I remember, the dedication of "The Mystery" frightened him. They did not hold each other in the less estimation, the one for being a lord, and the other a lover of lords: neither did Sir Walter's connexion with the calumniating press of Edinburgh at all shock his noble friend. It added rather "a fearful joy" to his esteem; carrying with it a look of something, "bloody, bold, and resolute:" at the same time, more resolute than bold, and more death-dealing than either;—a sort of available other-man's weapon, which increased the sum of his power, and was a set-off against his character for virtue.

The first number of the Liberal was now

on the anvil, and Mr. Shelley's death had given me a new uneasiness. The reader will see in Mr. Shelley's Letters, that Lord Byron had originally proposed a work of the kind to Mr. Moore; at least, a periodical work of some sort, which they were jointly to write. Mr. Moore doubted the beatitude of such divided light, and declined it. His Lordship then proposed it through Mr. Shelley to me. I wrote to both of them to say, that I should be happy to take such an opportunity of restoring the fortunes of a battered race of patriots; and as soon as we met in Pisa, it was agreed that the work should be political, and assist in carrying on the good cause. The title of Liberal was given it by Lord Byron. We were to share equally the profits, the work being printed and published by my brother; and it was confidently anticipated that money would pour in upon all of us.

Enemies however, had been already at work. Lord Byron was alarmed for his credit with his fashionable friends: among whom, although on the liberal side, patriotism was less in favour, than the talk about it. This man wrote

to him, and that wrote, and another came. Mr. Hobhouse rushed over the Alps, not knowing which was the more awful, the mountains, or the Magazine. Mr. Murray wondered, Mr. Gifford smiled, (a lofty symptom!) and Mr. Moore (tu quoque, Horati!) said that the Liberal had "a taint" in it! This however was afterwards. But Lord Byron, who was as fond as a footman of communicating unpleasant intelligence, told us from the first, that his "friends" had all been at him; friends, whom he afterwards told me he had "libelled all round," and whom (to judge of what he did by some of them) he continued to treat in the same impartial manner. He surprised my friend, Mr. Brown, at Pisa, by volunteering a gossip on this matter, in the course of which he drew a comparison between me and one of his "friends," to whom, he said, he had been accused of preferring me; "and," added he, with an air of warmth, "so I do." The meaning of this was, that the person in question was out of favour at the moment, and I was in. Next day the tables may have been turned. I met Mr. Hobhouse soon after in the

Casa Lanfranchi. He was very polite and complimentary; and then, if his noble friend was to be believed, did all he could to destroy the connexion between us. One of the arguments used by the remonstrants with his Lordship was, that the connexion was not "gentlemanly;" a representation which he professed to treat with great scorn, whether birth or manners were concerned; and I will add, that he had reason to do so. It was a ridiculous assumption, which, like all things of that sort, was to tell upon the mere strength of its being one. The manners of such of his Lordship's friends as I ever happened to meet with, were, in fact, with one exception, nothing superior to their birth, if two such unequal things may be put on a level. It is remarkable (and, indeed, may account for the cry about gentility, which none are so given to as the vulgar,) that they were almost all persons of humble origin; one of a race of booksellers; another the son of a grocer; another, of a glazier; and a fourth, though the son of a baronet, the grandson of a linen-draper. Readers who know any thing of me, or such as I care to

be known by, will not suspect me of undervaluing tradesmen or the sons of tradesmen, who may be, and very often are, both as gentlemanly and accomplished as any men in England. It did not require the Frenchman's discovery, (that, at a certain remove, every body is related to every body else,) to make a man think sensibly on this point now-a-days. Pope was a linen-draper's son, and Cowley a grocer's. Who would be coxcomb enough to venture to think the worse on that account of either of those illustrious men, whether for wit or gentility; and both were gentlemen as well as wits. But when persons bring a charge upon things indifferent, which, if it attaches at all, attaches to none but themselves who make it, the thing indifferent becomes a thing ridiculous. Mr. Shelley, a baronet's son, was also of an old family: and, as to his manners, though they were in general those of a recluse, and of an invalid occupied with his thoughts, they were any thing but vulgar. They could be, if he pleased, in the most received style of his rank. He was not incapable, when pestered with moral vulgarity, of assuming even

an air of aristocratic pride and remoteness. Some of Lord Byron's friends would have given him occasion for this twenty times in a day. They did wisely to keep out of his way. As to my birth, the reader may see what it was in another part of the volume; and my manners I leave him to construe kindly or otherwise, according to his own.

There is nothing on the part of others, from which I have suffered so much in the course of my life, as reserve and disingenuousness. Had Lord Byron, incontinent in every thing else, told me at once, that in case it did not bring him an influx of wealth, he could not find it in his heart to persist in what was objected to by a *côterie* on the town,—or had his friends, whom he "libelled all round," and some of whom returned him the compliment, been capable of paying me or themselves the compliment of being a little sincere with me, and showing me any reasons for supposing that the work would be injurious to Lord Byron (for I will imagine, for the sake of argument, that such might have been the case), I should have put an end to the design at once. As it

was, though his Lordship gave in before long, and had undoubtedly made up his mind to do so long before he announced it, yet not only did the immediate influence prevail at first over the remoter one, but it is a mistake to suppose that he was not mainly influenced by the expectation of profit. He expected very large returns from "The Liberal." Readers in these days need not be told that periodical works, which have a large sale, are a mine of wealth. Lord Byron had calculated that matter well; and when it is added, that he loved money, adored notoriety, and naturally entertained a high opinion of the effect of any new kind of writing which he should take in hand, nobody will believe it probable (nobody who knew him will believe it possible) that he should voluntarily contemplate the rejection of profits which he had agreed to receive. He would have beheld in them the most delightful of all proofs, that his reputation was not on the wane. For here, after all, lay the great secret, both of what he did and what he did not do. He was subject, it is true, to a number of weak impulses; would agree to this thing and propose another,

purely out of incontinence of will; and offer to do one day what he would bite his fingers off to get rid of the next. But this plan of a periodical publication was no sudden business; he had proposed it more than once, and to different persons; and his reasons for it were, that he thought he should get both money and fame. A pique with "The Quarterly Review," and his Tory admirers, roused his regard for the opposite side of the question. He thought to do himself good, and chagrin his critics, by assisting an enemy. The natural Toryism of some pretended lovers of liberty first alarmed him by a hint, that he might possibly not succeed. He supported his resolution by the hopes I have just mentioned, and even tried to encourage himself into a pique with his friends: but the failure of the large profits—the non-appearance of the golden visions he had looked for,—of the Edinburgh and Quarterly returns,—of the solid and splendid proofs of this new country which he should conquer in the regions of notoriety, to the dazzling of all men's eyes and his own,—this it was, this was the bitter disappointment which

made him determine to give way, and which ultimately assisted in carrying him as far as Greece, in the hope of another redemption of his honours. From the moment he saw the moderate profits of "The Liberal," (quite enough to encourage perseverance, if he had had it, but not in the midst of a hundred wounded vanities and inordinate hopes), he resolved to have nothing farther to do with it in the way of real assistance. He made use of it only for the publication of some things which his Tory bookseller was afraid to put forth. Indeed, he began with a contribution of that sort; but then he thought it would carry every thing before it. It also enabled him to make a pretence, with his friends, of doing as little as possible; while he secretly indulged himself in opposition both to them and his enemies. It failed; and he then made an instrument of the magazine, in such a manner as to indulge his own spleen, and maintain an appearance of co-operation, while in reality he did nothing for it but hasten its downfall.

There were undoubtedly other causes which conspired to this end; but they were of minor

importance, and would gradually have been done away, had he possessed spirit and independence enough to persevere. It was thought that Mr. Shelley's co-operation would have hurt the magazine; and so it might in a degree; till the public became too much interested to object to it; but Mr. Shelley was dead, and people were already beginning to hear good of him and to like him. *Extinctus amabitur.* I myself, however, who was expected to write a good deal, and probably to be inspired beyond myself by the delight and grandeur of my position, was in very bad health, and as little conscious of delight and grandeur as possible. I had been used to write under trying circumstances; but latterly I had been scarcely able to write at all; and at the time I never felt more oppressed in my life with a sense of what was to be done. Then the publisher was a much better patriot than man of business: he was also new to his work as a bookseller; and the trade (who can do more in these matters than people are aware of) set their faces against him; particularly Lord Byron's old publisher, who was jealous and in a frenzy. To crown

all, an article (the "Vision of Judgment") was sent my brother for insertion, which would have frightened any other publisher, or at least set him upon garbling and making stars. My brother saw nothing in it but Lord Byron, and a prodigious hit at the Tories; and he prepared his machine accordingly for sending forward the blow unmitigated. Unfortunately it recoiled, and played the devil with all of us. I confess, for my part, having been let a little more into the interior in these matters, that had I seen the article, before it was published, I should have advised against the appearance of certain passages; but Lord Byron had no copy in Italy. It was sent, by his direction, straight from Mr. Murray to the publisher's; and the first time I beheld it, was in the work that I edited.

That first number of "The Liberal" got us a great number of enemies, some of a nature which we would rather have had on our side; a great many because they felt their self-love wounded as authors, and more out of a national prejudice. The prejudice is not so strong as it was upon the particular subject alluded to; but it

is the least likely to wear out, because the national vanity is concerned in it, and it can only be conquered by an admission of defects. What renders the case more inveterate is, that none partake of it more strongly than the most violent of its opponents. In addition to the scandal excited by the "Vision of Judgment," there was the untimely seasonableness of the epigrams upon poor Lord Castlereagh. Lord Byron wrote them. They arose from the impulse of the moment; were intended for a newspaper, and in that more fugitive medium, would have made a comparatively fugitive impression. Arrested in a magazine, they were kept longer before the eyes of the public, and what might have been pardoned as an impulse, was regarded with horror as a thing deliberate. Politicians in earnest, and politicians not in earnest, were mortified by the preface; all the real or pretended orthodox, who can admire a startling poem from a state-minister (Goethe), were vexed to see that Mr. Shelley could translate it; and all the pretenders in literature were vexed by the attack upon Hoole, and the article headed "Rhyme and Reason;" in which

latter, I fear, even a wit, whom I could name, was capable of finding an ill intention. I began to think so when I heard of his criticisms, and saw his next poem. But the "Vision of Judgment," with which none of the articles were to be compared, and which, in truth, is the best piece of satire Lord Byron ever put forth, was grudged us the more, and roused greater hostility on that account. Envy of the silliest kind, and from the silliest people, such as it is really degrading to be the object of, pursued us at every turn; and when Mr. Hazlitt joined us, alarm as well as envy was at its height. After all, perhaps, there was nothing that vexed these people, more than their inability to discover which were Lord Byron's articles, and which not. It betrayed a secret in the shallows of criticism, even to themselves, and was not to be forgiven. The work struggled on for a time, and then, owing partly to private circumstances, which I had explained in my first writing of these pages, but which it has become unnecessary to record, was quietly dropped. I shall only mention, that Lord Byron, after the failure of the

"great profits," had declared his intention of receiving nothing from the work till it produced a certain sum; and that I unexpectedly turned out to be in the receipt of the whole profits of the proprietorship, which I regarded, but too truly, as one of a very ominous description. All which publicly concerns the origin and downfall of the Magazine the readers are acquainted with, excepting perhaps the political pique which Mr. Hobhouse may have felt against us, and the critical one which has been attributed to Mr. Moore. Mr. Hazlitt is supposed to have had his share in the offence; and certainly, as far as writing in the work was concerned, he gave stronger reasons for it than I could do. But he shall speak for himself in a note, at the hazard of blowing up my less gunpowder text.* Mr. Hob-

* "At the time," says Mr. Hazlitt, "that Lord Byron thought proper to join with Mr. Leigh Hunt and Mr. Shelley in the publication called The Liberal, Blackwood's Magazine overflowed, as might be expected, with tenfold gall and bitterness; the John Bull was outrageous, and Mr. —— black in the face, at this unheard-of and disgraceful union. But who would have supposed that Mr. Thomas Moore and Mr. Hobhouse, those staunch friends and partisans of the

house was once called upon by the electors of Westminster for an explicit statement of

people, should also be thrown into almost hysterical agonies of well-bred horror at the coalition between their noble and ignoble acquaintance—between the patrician and 'the newspaper-man?' Mr. Moore darted backwards and forwards from Cold-Bath-Fields Prison to the Examiner office, from Mr. Longman's to Mr. Murray's shop in a state of ridiculous trepidation, to see what was to be done to prevent this degradation of the aristocracy of letters, this indecent encroachment of plebeian pretensions, this undue extension of patronage and compromise of privilege. The Tories were shocked that Lord Byron should grace the popular side by his direct countenance and assistance; the Whigs were shocked that he should share his confidence and counsels with any one who did not unite the double recommendations of birth and genius—but themselves! Mr. Moore had lived so long among the great, that he fancied himself one of them, and regarded the indignity as done to himself. Mr. Hobhouse had lately been black-balled by the Clubs, and must feel particularly sore and tenacious on the score of public opinion. Mr. Shelley's father, however, was an elder baronet than Mr. Hobhouse's; Mr. Leigh Hunt was 'to the full as genteel a man' as Mr. Moore, in birth, appearance, and education; the pursuits of all four were the same—the Muse, the public favour, and the public good. Mr. Moore was himself invited to assist in the undertaking, but he professed an utter aversion to, and warned Lord Byron against, having any concern with *joint publications*, as of a very neutralizing and levelling description. He might speak from experience.

his opinions on the subject of reform. He gave a statement which was thought not

He had tried his hand in that Ulysses' bow of critics and politicians, the Edinburgh Review, though his secret had never transpired. Mr. Hobhouse, too, had written Illustrations of Childe Harold (a sort of partnership concern)—yet, to quash the publication of The Liberal, he seriously proposed that his noble friend should write once a-week, *in his own name*, in the Examiner. The Liberal scheme, he was afraid, might succeed; the newspaper one he knew could not. I have been whispered, that the member for Westminster (for whom I once gave an ineffectual vote) has also conceived some distaste for me—I do not know why, except that I was at one time named as the writer of the famous Trecenti Juravimus Letter to Mr. Canning, which appeared in the Examiner, and was afterwards suppressed. He might feel the disgrace of such a supposition: I confess I did not feel the honour. The cabal, the bustle, the significant hints, the confidential rumours were at the height, when, after Mr. Shelley's death, I was invited to take a part in this obnoxious publication (obnoxious alike to friend and foe); and when the Essay on the *Spirit of Monarchy* appeared (which must indeed have operated like a bomb-shell thrown into the coteries that Mr. Moore frequented, as well as those that he had left,) this gentleman wrote off to Lord Byron, to say that, 'there was a taint in The Liberal, and that he should lose no time in getting out of it.' And this, from Mr. Moore to Lord Byron—the last of whom had just involved the publication, against which he was cautioned as having a taint in it, in a prosecution for libel by his *Vision of Judgment*,

to be explicit, or even intelligible; and I had the misfortune, in "The Examiner," to be

and the first of whom had scarcely written any thing all his life that had not a taint in it. It is true, the Holland-house party might be somewhat staggered by a *jeu d'esprit* that set their Blackstone and De Lolme theories at defiance, and that they could as little write as answer. But it was not that. Mr. Moore also complained that 'I had spoken against Lalla Rookh,' though he had just before sent me his 'Fudge Family.' Still it was not that. But at the time he sent me that very delightful and spirited publication, my little bark was seen 'hulling on the flood,' in a kind of dubious twilight, and it was not known whether I might not prove a vessel of gallant trim. Mr. Blackwood had not then directed his Grub-street battery against me: but as soon as this was the case, Mr. Moore was willing to 'whistle me down the wind and let me prey at fortune;' not that I 'proved haggard,' but the contrary. It is sheer cowardice and want of heart. The sole object of the rest is not to stem the tide of prejudice and falsehood, but to get out of the way themselves. The instant another is assailed (however unjustly,) instead of standing manfully by him, they *cut* the connexion as fast as possible, and sanction by their silence and reserve the accusations they ought to repel. *Sauve qui peut* — every one has enough to do to look after his own reputation or safety without rescuing a friend or propping up a falling cause. It is only by keeping in the back-ground on such occasions (like Gil Blas, when his friend Ambrose Lamela was led by in triumph to the *auto-da-fe*) that they can escape the like honours and a sum-

compelled to say that I was among the number of the dull perceptions. A few days after-

mary punishment. A shower of mud, a flight of nick-names (glancing a little out of their original direction) might obscure the last glimpse of royal favour, or stop the last gasp of popularity. Nor could they answer it to their noble friends and more elegant pursuits, to be received in such company, or to have their names coupled with similar outrages. Their sleek, glossy, aspiring pretensions should not be exposed to vulgar contamination, or to be trodden under foot of a swinish multitude. Their birth-day suits (unused) should not be dragged through the kennel, nor their 'tricksy' laurel wreaths stuck in the pillory. This would make them equally unfit to be taken into the palaces or the carriages of peers. If excluded from both, what would become of them? The only way, therefore, to avoid being implicated in the abuse poured upon others, is to pretend that it is just—the way not to be made the object of the *hue and cry* raised against a friend, is to aid it by underhand whispers. It is pleasant neither to participate in disgrace nor to have honours divided. The more Lord Byron confined his intimacy and friendship to a few persons of middling rank, but of extraordinary merit, the more it must redound to his and their credit. The lines of Pope,

> 'To view with scornful, yet with jealous eyes,
> And hate for arts which caused himself to rise,'—

might still find a copy in the breast of more than one scribbler of politics and fashion. Mr. Moore might not think without a pang of the author of 'Rimini,' sitting at his

wards, meeting him in Saint James's-street, he said he wondered at my coming to that conclusion, and asked me how it could happen. I did not enter into the origin of the phenomenon, but said that I could not help it, and that the statement did appear to me singularly obscure. Since that time, I believe, I never saw him till we met in the Casa Lanfranchi. As to Mr. Moore, he did not relish, I know, the objection which I had made to the style of "Lalla Rookh;" but then he had told me so; he encouraged me to speak freely; he had spoken freely himself; and I felt all the admiration of him, if not of his poem, which candour, in addition to wit, can excite. I never suspected that he would make this a ground of quarrel with me in after-times; nor do I now wish to give more strength to Lord

ease with the author of 'Childe Harold;' Mr. Hobhouse might be averse to see my dogged prose bound up in the same volume with his Lordship's splendid verse; and assuredly it would not facilitate his admission to the Clubs, that his friend Lord Byron had taken the Editor of "The Examiner" by the hand, and that their common friend, Mr. Moore, had taken no active steps to prevent it!"—*Plain Speaker*, vol. ii. p. 437.

Byron's way of representing things on this point than on any other. There may be as little foundation for his reporting that Mr. Moore would never forgive Hazlitt for saying that he "ought not to have written 'Lalla Rookh,' even for three thousand guineas;" a condemnation which, especially with the context that follows it, involves a compliment in its very excess. * But Mr. Moore was not

* "Mr. Moore ought not to have written "Lalla Rookh," even for three thousand guineas. His fame is worth more than that. He should have minded the advice of Fadladeen. It is not, however, a failure, so much as an evasion and a consequent disappointment of public expectation. He should have left it to others to break conventions with nations, and faith with the world. He should, at any rate, have kept his with the public. "Lalla Rookh" is not what people wanted to see whether Mr. Moore could do; namely, whether he could write a long epic poem. It is four short tales. The interest, however, is often high-wrought and tragic, but the execution still turns to the effeminate and voluptuous side. Fortitude of mind is the first requisite of a tragic or epic writer. Happiness of nature and felicity of genius are the pre-eminent characteristics of the bard of Erin. If he is not perfectly contented with what he is, all the world beside is. He had no temptation to risk any thing in adding to the love and admiration of his age, and more than one country."—*Lectures on the English Poets,* p. 301.

candid, when he wrote secretly to Lord Byron, to induce him to give up the Magazine; and to tell him, there was "a taint" in it. He says he ought to have recollected, that Lord Byron always showed the letters that were written to him. This regret he has expressed to a mutual friend; but I do not see how it mends the matter. And what did he mean by "a taint?" Was it a taint of love—(very loth am I to put two such words together, but it is for him to explain the inconsistency)—Was it a taint of love, or of libel? or of infidelity? or of independence? And was the taint the greater, because the independence was true? Yes: Mr. Hazlitt has explained that matter but too well.

Towards the end of September, Lord Byron and myself, in different parties, left Pisa for Genoa. He was restless, as he had always been; Tuscany was uncomfortable to him; and at Genoa he would hover on the borders of his inclination for Greece. Perhaps he had already made arrangements for going there. We met at Lerici on our way. He had an illness at that place; and all my melancholy

was put to its height by seeing the spot my departed friend had lived in, and his solitary mansion on the sea-shore. The place is wild and retired, with a bay and rocky eminences; the people suited to it, something between inhabitants of sea and land. In the summer-time they will be up all night dabbling in the water, and making wild noises. Here Mr. Trelawney joined us. He took me to the Villa Magni (the house just alluded to); and we paced over its empty rooms, and neglected garden. The sea fawned upon the shore, as though it could do no harm.

At Lerici we had an earthquake. It was the strongest we experienced in Italy. At Pisa there had been a dull intimation of one, such as happens in that city about once in three years. In the neighbourhood of Florence we had another, pretty smart of its kind, but lasting only for an instant. It was exactly as if somebody with a strong hand had jerked a pole up against the ceiling of the lower room, right under one's feet. This was at Maiano, among the Fiesolan hills. People came out of their rooms, and enquired of one another

what was the matter; so that it was no delusion. At Lerici nobody could have mistaken. I was awakened at dawn with an extraordinary sensation, and directly afterwards the earthquake took place. It was strong enough to shake the pictures on the wall; and it lasted a sufficient time to resemble the rolling of a waggon under an archway, which it did both in noise and movement. I got up, and went to the window. The people were already collecting in the open place beneath it; and I heard, in the clear morning air, the word *Terremoto* repeated from one to another. The sensation for the next ten minutes or quarter of an hour, was very great. You expected the shock to come again, and to be worse. However, we had no more of it. We congratulated ourselves the more, because there was a tower on a rock just over our heads, which would have stood upon no ceremony with our inn. They told us, if I remember, that they had an earthquake on this part of the coast of Italy, about once every five years. Italy is a land of volcanoes, more or less subdued. It is a great grapery, built over a flue.

From Lerici, we proceeded part of our way by water, as far as Sestri. Lord Byron and Madame Guiccioli went in a private boat; Mr. Trelawney in another; and myself and family in a felucca. It was pretty to see the boats with their white sails, gliding by the rocks, over that blue sea. A little breeze coming on, our gallant seamen were afraid, and put into Porto Venere, a deserted town a short distance from Lerici. I asked them if they really meant to put in, upon which they looked very determined on that point, and said, that "Englishmen had no sense of danger." I smiled internally to think of the British Channel. I thought also of the thunder and lightning in this very sea, where they might have seen British tars themselves astonished with fear. In Italy, Englishmen are called "the mad English," from the hazards they run. They like to astonish the natives by a little superfluous peril. If you see a man coming furiously down the street on horseback, you may be pretty certain he is an Englishman. An English mail-coach, with that cauliflower of human beings a-top of it, lumping from side

to side, would make the hearts of a Tuscan city die within them.

Porto Venere is like a petrified town in a story-book. The classical name took us, and we roamed over it. It was curious to pass the houses one after the other, and meet not a soul. Such inhabitants as there are, confine themselves to the sea-shore. After resting a few hours, we put forth again, and had a lazy, sunny passage to Sestri, where a crowd of people assailed us, like savages at an island, for our patronage and portmanteaus. They were robust, clamorous, fishy fellows, like so many children of the Tritons in Raphael's pictures; as if those plebeian gods of the sea had been making love to Italian chambermaids. Italian goddesses have shown a taste not unsimilar, and more condescending; and English ones too in Italy, if scandal is to be believed. But Naples is the head-quarters of this overgrowth of wild luxury. Marini, a Neapolitan, may have had it in his eye, when he wrote that fine sonnet of his, full of aboriginal gusto, brawny and bearded, about Proteus pursuing Cymothoe. (See *Parnaso Italiano, tom.* 41,

p. 10.) Liking every thing real in poetry, I should be tempted to give a specimen; but am afraid of Mr. Moore.

From Sestri we proceeded over the maritime part of the Apennines to Genoa. Their character is of the least interesting sort of any mountains, being neither distinct nor wooded; but barren, savage, and coarse; without any grandeur but what arises from an excess of that appearance. They lie in a succession of great doughy billows, like so much enormous pudding, or petrified mud.

Genoa again! With what different feelings we beheld it the first time! Mrs. Shelley, who preceded us to the city, had found houses both for Lord Byron's family and my own at Albaro, a neighbouring village on a hill. We were to live in the same house with her; and in the Casa Negroto we accordingly found an English welcome. There were forty rooms in it, some of them such as would be considered splendid in England, and all neat and new, with borders and arabesques. The balcony and staircase were of marble; and there was a little flower-garden. The rent of this house

was twenty pounds a-year. Lord Byron paid four-and-twenty for his, which was older and more imposing, with rooms in still greater plenty, and a good piece of ground. It was called the Casa Saluzzi.* Mr. Landor and his family had occupied a house in the same village —the Casa Pallavicini. He has recorded an interesting dialogue that took place in it.† Of Albaro I have given an account in another work.

The Genoese post brought us the first number of "The Liberal," accompanied both with hopes and fears, the latter of which were too speedily realized. Living now in a separate house from Lord Byron, I saw less of him than before; and under all the circumstances, it was as well. It was during our residence in this part of Italy, that the remaining numbers of "The Liberal" were published. I did what I

* Any relation to "Saluces," whose "Markis" married the patient Griselda? Saluces was in the maritime Apennines, by Piedmont, and might have originated a family of Genoese nobles. Classical and romantic associations abound so at every turn in Italy, that upon the least hint a book speaketh.

† Imaginary Conversations, Vol. i. p. 179, Second Edition.

could to make him persevere ; and have to take shame to myself, that in my anxiety on that point, I persuaded him to send over "The Blues" for insertion, rather than contribute nothing. It is the only thing connected with "The Liberal" that I gave myself occasion to regret. I cannot indeed boast of my communications to it. Illness and unhappiness must be my excuse. They are things under which a man does not always write his worst. They may even supply him with a sort of fevered inspiration ; but this was not my case at the time. The only pieces I would save, if I could, from oblivion, out of that work, are the "Rhyme and Reason," the "Lines to a Spider," and the copy of verses entitled "Mahmoud." The little gibe on his native place, out of "Al Hamadani," might accompany them. I must not omit, that Lord Byron would have put his "Island" in it, and I believe another poem, if I had thought it of use. It would all have been so much dead weight ; especially as the readers, not being certain it was contributed by his Lordship, would not have known whether they were to be enrap-

tured or indifferent. By and by he would have taken them out, published them by themselves, and then complained that they would have sold before, if it had not been for "The Liberal." What he should have done for the work was to stand by it openly and manfully, to make it the obvious channel of his junction with the cause of freedom, to contribute to it not his least popular or his least clever productions, but such as the nature of the work should have inspired and recommended, or in default of being able to do this (for perhaps he was not fitted to write for a periodical work) he should have gained all the friends for it he could, not among those whom he "libelled all round," but among thousands of readers all prepared to admire, and love him, and think it an honour to fight under his banner. But he had no real heart in the business, nor for any thing else but a feverish notoriety. It was by this he was to shake at once the great world and the small; the mountain and the mouse; the imaginations of the public, and the approving nod of the "men of wit and fashion about town." Mr. Hazlitt, habitually paradoxical,

sometimes pastoral, and never without the self-love which he is so fond of discerning in others, believed at the moment that a lord had a liking for him, and that a lord and a sophisticate poet would put up with his sincerities about the aristocratical and the primitive. It begat in him a love for the noble Bard; and I am not sure that he has got rid, to this day, of the notion that it was returned. He was taken in, as others had been, and as all the world chose and delighted to be, as long as the flattering self-reflection was allowed a remnant to act upon. The mirror was pieced at Missolonghi, and then they could expatiate at large on the noble lord's image and their own! Sorry cozenage! Poor and melancholy conclusion to come to respecting great as well as little; and such as would be frightful to think of, if human nature, after all, were not better than they pretend. Lord Byron in truth was afraid of Mr. Hazlitt; he admitted him like a courtier, for fear he should be treated by him as an enemy; but when he beheld such articles as the "Spirit of Monarchy," where the "taint" of polite corruption was to be exposed, and the

First Acquaintance with Poets, where Mr. Wordsworth was to be exalted above depreciation,

> "In spite of pride, in erring reason's spite—"

(for such was Mr. Hazlitt's innocent quotation) his Lordship could only wish him out again, and take pains to show his polite friends that he had nothing in common with so inconsiderate a plebeian. Mr. Hazlitt is a little too angry with Mr. Moore. He ought to include himself, who undertook to be still more independent of high life, and who can afford better to be mistaken. A person who knew Mr. Moore well, told me, that asking him one day how he should feel, if the King were to offer to make him a baronet, the author of the "Irish Melodies" replied, "Good God! how those people can annihilate us!" I told this answer to Mr. Hazlitt, who justly admired the candour of it. It would have been more admirable, however, if the poet were to omit those innocent scoffs at the admirers of lords and titles, with which he sometimes thinks fit to mystify himself: and the philosopher's ad-

miration of candour would be better, if he were always candid himself, and now and then a little philosophic.

I passed a melancholy time at Albaro, walking about the stony alleys, and thinking of Mr. Shelley. My intercourse with Lord Byron, though less than before, was considerable: and we were always, as the phrase is, "on good terms." He knew what I felt, for I said it. I also knew what he thought, for he said that, "in a manner;" and he was in the habit of giving you a good deal to understand, in what he did not say. In the midst of all his strange conduct, he professed a great personal regard. He would do the most humiliating things, insinuate the bitterest, both of me and my friends, and then affect to do all away with a soft word, protesting that nothing he ever said was meant to apply to myself.

I will take this opportunity of recording some more anecdotes as they occur to me. We used to walk in the grounds of the Casa Saluzzi, talking for the most part of indifferent matters, and endeavouring to joke away the

consciousness of our position. We joked even upon our differences of opinion. It was a jest between us, that the only book that was unequivocally a favourite on both sides, was Boswell's "Life of Johnson." I used to talk of Johnson when I saw him out of temper, or wished to avoid other subjects. He asked me one day, how I should have felt in Johnson's company. I said it was difficult to judge; because, living in other times, and one's character being modified by them, I could not help thinking of myself as I was now, and Johnson as he was in times previous: so that it appeared to me that I should have been somewhat Jacobinical in his company, and not disposed to put up with his *ipse dixits*. He said, that "Johnson would have awed him, he treated lords with so much respect." This was better said than it was meant to be, and I have no doubt was very true. Johnson would have made him a bow like a churchwarden; and Lord Byron would have been in a flutter of worshipped acquiescence. He liked to imitate Johnson, and say, "Why, Sir," in a high mouthing way, rising, and looking about him.

Yet he hardly seemed to relish Peter Pindar's imitations, excellent as they were. I used to repeat to him those laughable passages out of "Bozzy and Piozzy."

Dear Dr. Johnson,—
(It is Mrs. Thrale who speaks)—
"*Dear* Dr. Johnson was in size an ox,
And of his uncle Andrew learnt to box;
A man to wrestlers and to bruisers dear,
Who kept the ring in Smithfield a whole year.
The Doctor had an uncle too, ador'd
By jumping gentry, called Cornelius Ford;
Who jump'd in boots, which jumpers never choose,
Far as a famous jumper jump'd in shoes."

See also the next passage in the book—

"At supper rose a dialogue on witches,"

which I would quote also, only I am afraid Mr. Moore would think I was trespassing on the privileges of high life. Again; Madame Piozzi says,

"Once at our house, amidst our Attic feast,
We liken'd our acquaintances to beasts:
As for example—some to calves and hogs,
And some to bears and monkeys, cats, and dogs.

We said, (which charm'd the Doctor much, no doubt,)
His mind was like, of elephants the snout;
That could pick pins up, yet possess'd the vigour
Of trimming well the jacket of a tiger."

Bozzy. When Johnson was in Edinburgh, my wife,
To please his palate, studied for her life;
With ev'ry rarity she fill'd her house,
And gave the Doctor, for his dinner, *grouse.*

Piozzi. Dear Doctor Johnson left off drinks fermented,
With quarts of chocolate and cream contented;
Yet often down his throat's prodigious gutter,
Poor man! he pour'd whole floods of melted butter."

At these passages, which make me laugh so for the thousandth time, that I can hardly write them, Lord Byron had too invincible a relish of a good thing not to laugh also, but he did it uneasily. The cause is left to the reader's speculation.

With the commiseration about the melted butter, we agreed heartily. When Lord Castlereagh killed himself, it was mentioned in the papers that he had taken his usual tea and buttered toast for breakfast. I said there was no knowing how far even so little a thing as buttered toast might not have fatally assisted in

exasperating that ill state of stomach, which is found to accompany melancholy. As "the last feather breaks the horse's back," so the last injury done to the organs of digestion may make a man kill himself. He agreed with me entirely in this; and said, the world were as much in the wrong, in nine cases out of ten, respecting the immediate causes of suicide, as they were in their notions about the harmlessness of this and that food, and the quantity of it.

Like many other wise theorists on this subject, he had wilfully shut his eyes to the practice, though I do not mean to say he was excessive in eating and drinking. He had only been in the habit, latterly, of taking too much for his particular temperament; a fault, in one respect, the most pardonable in those who are most aware of it, the uneasiness of a sedentary stomach tempting them to the very indulgence that is hurtful. I know what it is; and beg, in this, as on other occasions, not to be supposed to imply any thing to my own advantage, when I am upon points that may be construed to the disadvantage of others. But he had got

fat, and then went to the other extreme. He came to me one day out of another room, and said, with great glee, "Look here! what do you say to this?" at the same time doubling the lapells of his coat one over the other:—"three months ago," added he, "I could not button it." Sometimes, though rarely, with a desperate payment of his virtue, he would make an outrageous dinner; eating all sorts of things that were unfit for him, and suffering accordingly next day. He once sent to Paris for one of the travelling pies they make there—things that distribute indigestion by return of post, and cost three or four guineas. Twenty crowns, I think, he gave for it. He tasted, and dined. The next day he was fain to make a present of six-eighths of it to an envoy:—"Lord Byron's compliments, and he sends his Excellency a pasty that has seen the world." He did not write this; but this was implied in his compliment. It is to be hoped his Excellency had met the pasty before.

It is a credit to my noble acquaintance, that he was by far the pleasantest when he had got wine in his head. The only time I invited

myself to dine with him, I told him I did it on that account, and that I meant to push the bottle so, that he should intoxicate me with his good company. He said he would have a set-to; but he never did it. I believe he was afraid. It was a little before he left Italy: and there was a point in contest between us not regarding myself) which he thought perhaps I should persuade him to give up. When in his cups, which was not often, nor immoderately, he was inclined to be tender; but not weakly so, nor lachrymose. I know not how it might have been with every body, but he paid me the compliment of being excited to his very best feelings; and when I rose late to go away, he would hold me down, and say with a look of entreaty, "Not yet." Then it was that I seemed to talk with the proper natural Byron as he ought to have been; and there was not a sacrifice I could not have made to keep him in that temper; and see his friends love him, as much as the world admired. Next morning it was all gone. His intimacy with the worst part of mankind had got him again

in its chilling crust; and nothing remained but to despair and joke.

In his wine he would volunteer an imitation of somebody, generally of Incledon. He was not a good mimic in the detail; but he could give a lively broad sketch; and over his cups his imitations were good-natured, which was seldom the case at other times. His Incledon was vocal. I made pretensions to the oratorical part; and between us, we boasted that we made up the entire phenomenon. Mr. Mathews would have found it defective; or rather, he would not; for had he been there, we should judiciously have secreted our pretensions, and had the true likeness. We just knew enough of the matter, to make proper admirers.

Good God! The mention of this imitation makes me recollect under what frightful circumstances of gaiety we returned from performing an office more than usually melancholy on the sea-shore. I dare allow myself only to allude to it. But we dined and drank after it —dined little, and drank much. Lord Byron

had not shone that day, even in his cups. For myself, I had bordered upon emotions which I have never suffered myself to indulge, and which foolishly as well as impatiently render calamity, as somebody termed it, "an affront, and not a misfortune." The barouche drove rapidly through the forest of Pisa. We sang, we laughed, we shouted. I even felt a gaiety the more shocking, because it was real and a relief. What the coachman thought of us, God knows; but he helped to make up a ghastly trio. He was a good-tempered fellow, and an affectionate husband and father; yet he had the reputation of having offered his master to knock a man on the head. I wish to have no such waking dream again. It was worthy of a German ballad.

This servant his Lordship had exalted into something wonderfully attached to him, though he used to fight hard with the man on some points. But alive as he was to the mock-heroic in others, he would commit it with a strange unconscious gravity, where his own importance was concerned. Another servant of his, a great baby of a fellow, with a florid face and huge

whiskers, who, with very equivocal symptoms of valour, talked highly about Greece and fighting, and who went strutting about in a hussar dress, and a sword by his side, gave himself, all on a sudden, such ludicrous airs at the door, as his Lordship's porter, that notice was taken of it. "Poor fellow!" said Lord Byron, "he is too full of his attachment to me. He is a sort of *Dolabella!*" Thus likening a great simpleton of a footman to the follower of Antony!

"Have you seen my three helmets?" he inquired one day, with an air between hesitation and hurry. Upon being answered in the negative, he said he would show them me, and began to enter a room for that purpose; but stopped short, and put it off to another time. The mock-heroic was a little too strong for him. These three helmets he had got up in honour of his going to war, and as harbingers of achievement. They were of the proper classical shape, gilt, and had his motto, "Crede Byron," upon them. One was for himself, and the two others were destined to illustrate the heads of the County Pietro and Mr. Trelaw-

ney, who, I believe, declined the honour. I saw a specimen afterwards—I never heard any more of them.

It is a problem with the uninitiated, whether lords think much of their titles or not; whether the fair sound is often present to their minds. Some of them will treat the notion with contempt, and call the speculation vulgar. You may set these down in particular for thinking of them often. The chance is, that most of them do, or what is a title worth? They think of them, as beauties think of their cheeks. Lord Byron, as M. Beyle guessed so well, certainly thought a great deal of his. I have touched upon this point before; but I may add, that this was one of the reasons why he was so fond of the Americans, and thought of paying them a visit. He concluded, that having no titles, they had the higher sense of them; otherwise they were not a people to his taste. He thought them shrewd, inasmuch as they were money-getters; but vulgar, and to seek on all other points, and "stubborn dogs." All their patriotism, in his mind, was nothing but stubbornness. He laughed at

them, sometimes to their faces: which they were grateful enough to take for companionship and a want of pretence. The homage of one or two of them, however, he had reason to doubt, whether he did or not. I could mention one who knew him thoroughly, and who could never sufficiently express his astonishment at having met with so unpoetical a poet, and so unmajestic a lord. Those who only paid him a short visit, or communicated with him from a distance, seemed as if they could not sufficiently express their flattered sense of his greatness; and he laughed at this, while he delighted in it. Receiving one day a letter from an American, who treated him with a gravity of respect, at once stately and deferential, "Now," said he, "this man thinks he has hit the point to a nicety, and that he has just as proper a notion of a lord as is becoming on both sides; whereas he is intoxicated with his new correspondent." I will not mention what he said of some others, not Americans, who thought themselves at a great advantage with the uninformed. But so minute was his criticism in these matters, that the most accom-

plished dedicators would have had reason to dread him, had they known all the niceties of knowledge, human and patrician, which he expected, before he could allow the approach to him to be perfect.

You were not to suppose, however, on your part, that he was more in earnest than he ought to be upon these matters, even when he was most so. He was to think and say what he pleased; but his hearers were to give him credit, in spite of himself, only for what squared with their notions of the graceful. Thus he would make confessions of vanity, or some other fault, or of inaptitude for a particular species of writing, partly to sound what you thought of it, partly that while you gave him credit for the humility, you were to protest against the concession. All the perversity of his spoiled nature would then come into play; and it was in these, and similar perplexities, that the main difficulty of living with him consisted. If you made every thing tell in his favour, as most people did, he was pleased with you for not differing with him, but then nothing was gained. The reverse would have been an affront. He lumped you

with the rest; and was prepared to think as little of you in the particular, as he did of any one else.* If you contested a claim, or allowed him to be in the right in a concession, he could neither argue the point nor really concede it. He was only mortified, and would take his re-

* The following is an extract from a letter of Lord Byron's to Mr. Shelley. It will puzzle the adorers of his early narrative writing; and furnish a subject of pleasing doubt to the public, whether to admire such cavalier treatment of them or not:—

"The only literary news that I have heard of the plays (contrary to your friendly augury), is that the Edinburgh R. has attacked them all three—as well as it could:—I have not seen the article.—Murray writes discouragingly, and says that nothing published this year has made the least impression, including, I presume, what he has published on my account also.—You see what it is to throw pearls to swine.—As long as I wrote the exaggerated nonsense which has corrupted the public taste, they applauded to the very echo; and now that I have composed within these three or four years some things which should 'not willingly be let die,'—the whole herd snort and grumble, and return to wallow in their mire.—However, it is fit I should pay the penalty of spoiling them, as no man has contributed more than me in my earlier compositions to produce that exaggerated and false style.—It is a fit retribution that any really classical production should be received as these plays have been treated."

venge. Lastly, if you behaved neither like his admirers in general, nor in a sulky or disputatious manner, but naturally, and as if you had a right to your jest and your independence, whether to differ with or admire, and apart from an eternal consideration of himself, he thought it an assumption, and would perplex you with all the airs and humours of an insulted beauty. Thus nobody could rely, for a comfortable intercourse with him, either upon admissions, or non-admissions, or even upon flattery itself. An immeasurable vanity kept even his adorers at a distance; like Xerxes enthroned, with his millions a mile off. And if, in a fit of desperation, he condescended to come closer and be fond, he laughed at you for thinking yourself of consequence to him, if you were taken in; and hated you if you stood out, which was to think yourself of greater consequence. Neither would a knowledge of all this, if you had made him conscious, have lowered his self-admiration a jot. He would have thought it the mark of a great man,—a noble capriciousness,—an evidence of power, which none but the Alexan-

ders and Napoleons of the intellectual world could venture upon. Mr. Hazlitt had some reason to call him " a sublime coxcomb." Who but he (or Rochester perhaps, whom he resembled) would have thought of avoiding Shakspeare, lest he should be thought to owe him any thing? And talking of Napoleon,—he delighted, when he took the additional name of Noel, in consequence of his marriage with an heiress, to sign himself N. B.; " because," said he, " Bonaparte and I are the only public persons whose initials are the same."

I have reason to think, that the opinions I entertained of breeding and refinement puzzled him extremely. At one time he would pay me compliments on the score of manners and appearance; at another, my Jacobinical friends had hurt me, and I had lived too much out of the world. He was not a good judge in either case. His notion of what was gentlemanly in appearance was a purely conventional one, and could include nothing higher. And what was essentially unvulgar, he would take for the reverse, because the polite vulgar did not practise it. I have no doubt he had a

poorer opinion of me, from the day that he met me carrying an old painting, which I had picked up. He had beguiled me formerly by bringing parcels of books under his arm; but I now concluded that he had not ventured them in the public eye. His footman must have brought them to the door. For my part, having got rid of some fopperies which I had at that time, I was not going to commence others which I had never been guilty of. I had seen too much of the world for that; not omitting the one that he chose for his arbiter.

Lord Byron knew nothing of the Fine Arts, and did not affect to care for them. He pronounced Rubens a dauber. The only pictures I remember to have seen in his rooms (with the exception of the Italian family pictures, that remained in the houses which he occupied) were a print of Jupiter and Antiope, and another of his little daughter, whom he always mentioned with pride. Pope, before he spoke of Handel, applied to Arbuthnot to know whether the composer really deserved what was said of him. It was after making a similar inquiry respecting Mozart, that Lord

Byron wrote the passage in his notes to Don Juan, giving him the preference to Rossini. Rossini was his real favourite. He liked his dash and animal spirits. All the best music, he said, was lively:—an opinion, in which few lovers of it will agree with him. Mr. Hazlitt, who is a connoisseur in the spirit of contradiction, may think that he said this out of spleen against some remark to the contrary; but in this, as in other instances, the critic is misled by his own practice. It was not difficult to discern the occasions on which Lord Byron spoke out of perversity; nor when it was that he was merely hasty and inconsequential; nor at what times he gave vent to an habitual persuasion; that is to say, translated his own practice and instinct into some sudden opinion. Such was the case in the present instance. I never knew him attempt any air but a lively one; and he was fondest of such as were the most blustering. You associated with it the idea of a stage-tyrant, or captain of banditti. One day he was splenetic enough on the subject of music. He said that all lovers of music were effeminate. He was not in good humour,

and had heard me, that morning, dabbling on a piano-forte. This was to provoke me to be out of humour myself; but I was provoked enough not to oblige him. I was ill, with an internal fever preying upon me, and full of cares of all sorts. He, the objector to effeminacy, was sitting in health and wealth, with rings on his fingers, and baby-work to his shirt; and he had just issued, like a sultan, out of his bath. I was nevertheless really more tranquil than he, ill and provoked as I was. I said that the love of music might be carried to a pitch of effeminacy, like any other pleasure; but that he would find it difficult to persuade the world, that Alfred and Epaminondas, and Martin Luther, and Frederick the Second, all eminent lovers of music, were effeminate men. He made no answer. I had spoilt a stanza in "Don Juan."

Speaking of "Don Juan," I will here observe that he had no plan with regard to that poem; that he did not know how long he should make it, nor what to do with his hero. He had a great mind to make him die a Methodist—a catastrophe which he sometimes

anticipated for himself. I said I thought there was no reason for treating either his hero or himself so ill. That as to his own case, he would find himself mustering up his intellectual faculties in good style, as the hour came on, and there was something to do,—barring drugs and a bit of delirium; and with regard to Don Juan, he was a good, careless, well-intentioned fellow, (though he might not have liked to be told so in the hearing of every body); and that he deserved at least to be made a retired country gentleman, very speculative and tolerant, and fond of his grandchildren. He lent an ear to this, and seemed to like it; but after all, as he had not himself died or retired, and wanted experience to draw upon, the termination of the poem would have depended on what he thought the fashionable world expected of it. His hero in this work was a picture of the better part of his own nature. When the author speaks in his own person, he is endeavouring to bully himself into a satisfaction with the worse, and courting the eulogies of the "knowing."

This reminds me of the cunning way in

which he has spoken of that passion for money in which he latterly indulged. He says, in one of his most agreeable, off-hand couplets in "Don Juan," after telling us what a poor inanimate thing life has become for him—

> "So for a good old gentlemanly vice,
> I think I shall take up with avarice."

This the public were not to believe. It is a specimen of the artifice noticed in another place. They were to regard it only as a pleasantry, issuing from a generous mouth. However, it was very true. He had already taken up with the vice, as his friends were too well aware; and this couplet was at once to baffle them with a sort of confession, and to secure the public against a suspicion of it. It was curious to see what mastery he suffered the weakest passions to have over him; as if his public fame and abstract superiority were to bear him out privately, in every thing. He confessed that he felt jealous of the smallest accomplishments. The meaning of this was, that supposing every one else, in all probability, to feel so, you were to give him credit

for being candid on a point which others concealed; or if they were not, the confession was to strike you as a piece of extraordinary acknowledgment on the part of a great man. The whole truth of the matter was to be found in the indiscriminate admiration he received. Those who knew him, took him at his word. They thought him so little above the weakness, that they did not care to exhibit any such accomplishment before him. We have been told of authors who were jealous even of beautiful women, because they divided attention. I do not think Lord Byron would have entertained a jealousy of this sort. He would have thought the women too much occupied with himself. But he would infallibly have been jealous, had the beautiful woman been a wit, or drawn a circle round her piano-forte. With men I have seen him hold the most childish contests for superiority; so childish, that had it been possible for him to divest himself of a sense of his pretensions and public character, they would have exhibited something of the conciliating simplicity of Goldsmith. He would then lay imaginary wagers;

and in a style which you would not have looked for in high life, thrust out his chin, and give knowing, self-estimating nods of the head, half nod and half shake, such as boys playing at chuck-farthing give, when they say, "Come; I tell you what now." A fat dandy who came upon us at Genoa, and pretended to be younger than he was, and to wear his own hair, discomposed him for the day. He declaimed against him in so deploring a tone, and uttered the word "wig" so often, that my two eldest boys, who were in the next room, were obliged to stifle their laughter.

His jealousy of Wordsworth and others, who were not town-poets, was more creditable to him, though he did not indulge it in the most becoming manner. He pretended to think worse of them than he did. He had the modesty one day to bring me a stanza, intended for "Don Juan," in which he had sneered at them all, adding, with respect to one of them, that nobody but myself thought highly of him. He fancied I should put up with this, for the sake of being mentioned in the poem, let the mention be what it might; an absurdity,

which nothing but his own vanity had suggested. I told him, that I should be unable to consider the introduction of such a stanza as any thing but an affront, and that he had better not put it in. He said he would not, and kept his word. I am now sorry I did not let it go; for it would have done me honour with posterity, far from what he intended. He did not equally keep his word, when he promised me to alter what he had said respecting the cause of Mr. Keats's death. But I speak more of this circumstance hereafter. For Southey he had as much contempt as any man can well have for another, especially for one who can do him an injury. He thought him a washy writer, and a canting politician; half a mercenary, and half a moral coxcomb. He was sadly out, however, when he compared his generosities with those of the Lake poet, and gave himself the preference. Mr. Southey, from all that I have heard, is a truly generous man, and says nothing about it. Lord Byron was not a generous man; and, in what he did, he contrived either to blow a trumpet before it himself, or to see that others blew one for

him. I speak of his conduct latterly. What he might have done, before he thought fit to put an end to his doubts respecting the superiority of being generous, I cannot say; but if you were to believe himself, he had a propensity to avarice from a child. At Harrow, he told me, he would save up his money, not as other boys did, for the pleasure of some great purchase or jovial expense, but in order to look at it and count it. I was to believe as much of this, or in such a manner, as to do him honour for the confession; but, unluckily, it had become too much like the practice of his middle age, not to be believed entirely. It was too obvious a part of the predominant feature in his character,—which was an indulgence of his self-will and self-love united, denying himself no pleasure that could add to the intensity of his consciousness and the means of his being powerful and effective, with a particular satisfaction in contributing as little as possible to the same end in others. His love of notoriety was superior even to his love of money; which is giving the highest idea that can be entertained of it. But he was

extremely anxious to make them go hand in hand. At one time he dashed away in England and got into debt, because he thought expense became him; but he looked to retrieving all this, and more, by marrying a fortune. When Shelley lived near him in Switzerland, he appeared to be really generous, because he had a generous man for his admirer, and one whose influence he felt extremely. Besides, Mr. Shelley had money himself, or the expectation of it; and he respected him the more, and was anxious to look well in his eyes on that account. In Italy, where a different mode of life, and the success of Beppo and Don Juan, had made him conclude that the romantic character was not necessary to fame, he shocked his companion one day, on renewing their intimacy, by asking him, whether he did not feel a real respect for a wealthy man, or at least, a greater respect for the rich man of the company, than for any other? Mr. Shelley gave him what Napoleon would have called a "superb no." It is true, the same question might have been put at random to a hundred Englishmen; and all,

if they were honest, might have answered "Yes;" but these would have come from the middling ranks, where the possession of wealth is associated with the idea of cleverness and industry. Among the privileged orders, where riches are inherited, the estimation is much more equivocal, the richest man there being often the idlest and stupidest. But Mr. Shelley had as little respect for the possession or accumulation of wealth under any circumstances, as Lord Byron had the reverse; and he would give away hundreds with as much zeal for another man's comfort, as the noble Lord would willingly save a guinea even in securing his pleasures. Perhaps, at one period of his residence there, no man in Italy, certainly no Englishman, ever contrived to practise more rakery and economy at one and the same time.—Italian women are not averse to accepting presents, or any other mark of kindness; but they can do without them, and his Lordship put them to the test. Presents, by way of showing his gratitude, or as another mode of interchanging delight and kindness between

friends, he had long ceased to make. I doubt whether his fair friend, Madame Guiccioli, ever received so much as a ring or a shawl from him. It is true, she did not require it. She was happy to show her disinterestedness in all points unconnected with the pride of her attachment; and I have as little doubt, that he would assign this as a reason for his conduct, and say he was as happy to let her prove it. But to be a poet and a wit, and to have had a liberal education, and write about love and lavishment, and not to find it in his heart, after all, to be able to put a friend and a woman upon a footing of graceful comfort with him in so poor a thing as a money-matter,—these were the sides of his character, in which love, as well as greatness, found him wanting, and in which it could discern no relief to its wounded self-respect, but at the risk of a greater mortification. The love of money, the pleasure of receiving it, even the gratitude he evinced when it was saved him, had not taught him the only virtue upon which lovers of money usually found their claims to a good construction:—he did not like paying a debt, and

would undergo pestering and pursuit to avoid it. "But what," cries the reader, "becomes then of the stories of his making presents of money and manuscripts, and his not caring for the profits of his writings, and his giving 10,000*l.* to the Greeks?" He did care for the profits of what he wrote, and he reaped a great deal: but, as I have observed before, he cared for celebrity still more; and his presents, such as they were, were judiciously made to that end. "Good heavens!" said a fair friend to me the other day, who knew him well,—"if he had but foreseen that you would have given the world an account of him! What would he not have done to cut a figure in your eyes!" As to the Greeks, the *present* of 10,000*l.* was first of all well trumpeted to the world: it then became a *loan* of 10,000*l.*; then a loan of 6000*l.*; and he told me, in one of his incontinent fits of communication and knowingness, that he did not think he should "*get off* under 4000*l.*" I know not how much was lent, after all; but I have been told, that good security was taken for it; and I was informed the other day, that the whole money had been

repaid. He was so jealous of your being easy upon the remotest points connected with property, that if he saw you ungrudging even upon so small a tax on your liberality as the lending of books, he would not the less fidget and worry you in lending his own. He contrived to let you feel that you had got them, and would insinuate that you had treated them carelessly, though he did not scruple to make marks and dogs'-ears in your's. O Truth! what scrapes of portraiture have you not got me into!

I believe there did exist one person to whom he would have been generous, if she pleased; perhaps was so. At all events, he left her the bulk of his property, and always spoke of her with the greatest esteem. This was his sister, Mrs. Leigh. He told me she used to call him "baby Byron!" It was easy to see, that of the two persons, she had by far the greater judgment: I will add, without meaning to impeach her womanhood, the more masculine sense. She has recorded him on his tomb as the author of "Childe Harold," which was not so judicious; but this may have been

owing to a fit of affectionate spleen at "Don Juan," which she could not bear, and (I was told) would never speak of. She thought he had committed his dignity in it. I believe she was the only woman for whom he ever entertained a real respect; a feeling, which was mixed up perhaps with something of family self-love. The only man he professed to entertain a real friendship for, was Lord Clare. I conclude that his Lordship may be excepted from the number of friends whom he "libelled all round."

His temper was not good. Reading one day in Montaigne the confession of that philosopher and "Seigneur," that a saddle not well fastened, or the flapping of a leather against his boot, would put him out of sorts for the day, he said it was his own case; and he seemed to think it that of every body else of any importance, if people would but confess it; otherwise they were dull or wanted vigour. For he was always mistaking the subtlety of that matter, and confounding patience with weakness, because there was a weak patience as well as a strong one. But it was not

only in small things that he was "put out." I have seen the expression of his countenance on greater occasions, absolutely festered with ill-temper,—all the beauty of it corrugated and made sore,—his voice at the same time being soft, and struggling to keep itself in, as if on the very edge of endurance. On such occasions, having no address, he did not know how to let himself be extricated from his position; and if I found him in this state, I contrived to make a few remarks, as serious as possible, on indifferent subjects, and so come away. An endeavour to talk him out of it, as a weakness, he might have had reason to resent:—sympathy would probably have drawn upon you a discussion of matters too petty for your respect; and gaiety would have been treated as an assumption, necessary to be put down by sarcasms, which it would have been necessary to put down in their turn. There was no living with these eternal assumptions and inequalities. When he knew me in England, independent and able to do him service, he never ventured upon a raillery. In Italy, he soon began to treat me with it; and I was

obliged, for both our sakes, to tell him I did not like it, and that he was too much in earnest. Raillery, indeed, unless it is managed with great delicacy, and borne as well by him that uses it as it is expected to be borne by its object, is unfit for grown understandings. It is a desperate substitute for animal spirits; and no more resembles them, than a jostle resembles a dance. Like boys fighting in sport, some real blow is given, and the rest is fighting in earnest. A passing, delicate raillery is another matter, and may do us both a good and a pleasure; but it requires exquisite handling. You can imagine it is Sir Richard Steele, or Garth, or any other good-natured wit, who is not in the habit of objecting. My friend Charles Lamb has rallied me, and made me love him the more. So has Mr. Shelley. But in a man of more doubtful candour or benevolence, in Addison for instance, with his natural reserve and his born *parsonism*, you would begin to suspect the motive to it; and in the case of Swift or Johnson, it no doubt much oftener produced awkward retaliations, than biographers have thought fit to record.

If Lord Byron had been a man of address, he would have been a kinder man. He never heartily forgave either you or himself for his deficiency on this point; and hence a good deal of his ill-temper, and his carelessness of your feelings. By any means, fair or foul, he was to make up for the disadvantage; and with all his exaction of conventional propriety from others, he could set it at nought in his own conduct in the most remarkable manner. He had an incontinence, I believe unique, in talking of his affairs, and showing you other people's letters. He would even make you presents of them; and I have accepted one or two that they might go no farther. But I have mentioned this before. If his five-hundred confidants, by a retinence as remarkable as his laxity, had not kept his secrets better than he did himself, the very devil might have been played with I know not how many people. But there was always this saving reflection to be made, that the man who could be guilty of such extravagances for the sake of making an impression, might be guilty of exaggerating or inventing what astonished you; and in-

deed, though he was a speaker of the truth on ordinary occasions,—that is to say, he did not tell you he had seen a dozen horses, when he had seen only two,—yet, as he professed not to value the truth when in the way of his advantage, (and there was nothing he thought more to his advantage than making you stare at him,) the persons who were liable to suffer from his incontinence, had all the right in the world to the benefit of this consideration.

His superstition was remarkable. I do not mean in the ordinary sense, because it was superstition, but because it was petty and old-womanish. He believed in the ill-luck of Fridays, and was seriously disconcerted if any thing was to be done on that frightful day of the week. Had he been a Roman, he would have startled at crows, while he made a jest of augurs. He used to tell a story of somebody's meeting him, while in Italy, in St. James's-street. The least and most childish of superstitions may, it is true, find subtle corners of warrant in the greatest minds; but as the highest pictures in Lord Byron's poetry were imitations,

so in the smallest of his personal superstitions he was maintained by something not his own. His turn of mind was material: egotism, and some remarkable experiences, had given it a compulsory twist the other way; but it never grew kindly or loftily in that quarter. Hence his taking refuge from uneasy thoughts, in sarcasm, and trifling, and notoriety. What there is of a good-natured philosophy in "Don Juan" was not foreign to his wishes; but it was the commonplace of the age, repeated with an air of discovery by the noble Lord, and as ready to be thrown in the teeth of those from whom he took it, provided any body laughed at them. His soul might well have been met in St. James's-street, for in the remotest of his poetical solitudes it was there. As to those who attribute the superstition of men of letters to infidelity, and then object to it for being inconsistent, because it is credulous, there is no greater inconsistency than their own; for as it is the very essence of infidelity to doubt, so, according to the nature it inhabits, it may as well doubt whether such and such things do not exist, as whether

they do: whereas, on the other hand, belief in particular dogmas, by the very nature of its tie, is precluded from this uncertainty, perhaps at the expense of being more foolishly certain.

It has been thought by some, that there was madness in his composition. He himself talked sometimes as if he feared it would come upon him. It was difficult, in his most serious moments, to separate what he spoke out of conviction, and what he said for effect. In moments of ill-health, especially when jaded and overwrought by the united effects of composition, and drinking, and sitting up, he might have had nervous misgivings to that effect; as more people perhaps are accustomed to have, than choose to talk about it. But I never saw any thing more mad in his conduct, than what I have just been speaking of; and there was enough in the nature of his position to account for extravagances in him, that would not have attained to that head under other circumstances. If every extravagance of which men are guilty, were to be pronounced madness, the world would be nothing but the Bedlam

which some have called it; and then the greatest madness of all would be the greatest rationality; which, according to others, it is. There is no end to these desperate modes of settling and unsettling every thing at a jerk. There was great perversity and self-will in Lord Byron's composition. It arose from causes which it would do honour to the world's rationality to consider a little closer, and of which I shall speak presently. This it was, together with extravagant homage paid him, that pampered into so regal a size every inclination which he chose to give way to. But he did not take a hawk for a handsaw; nor will the world think him deficient in brain. Perhaps he may be said to have had something, in little, of the madness which was brought upon the Roman emperors in great. His real pretensions were mixed up with imaginary ones, and circumstances contributed to give the whole a power, or at least a presence in the eyes of men, which his temperament was too feeble to manage properly. But it is not in the light of a madman that the world will ever seriously consider a man whose pro-

ductions delight them, and whom they place in the rank of contributors to the stock of wit. It is not as the madman witty, but as the wit, injured by circumstances considered to be rational, that Lord Byron is to be regarded. If his wit indeed would not have existed without these circumstances, then it would only show us that the perversest things have a tendency to right themselves, or produce their ultimate downfal: and so far, I would as little deny that his Lordship had a spice of madness in him, as I deny that he had not every excuse for what was unpleasant in his composition; which was none of his own making. So far, also, I would admit that a great part of the world are as mad as some have declared all the rest to be; that is to say, that although they are rational enough to perform the common offices of life, and even to persuade the rest of mankind that their pursuits and passions are what they should be, they are in reality but half rational beings, contradicted in the very outset of existence, and dimly struggling through life with the perplexity sown within them.

To explain myself very freely. I look upon Lord Byron as an excessive instance of what we see in hundreds of cases every day; namely, of the unhappy consequences of a parentage that ought never to have existed,—of the perverse and discordant humours of those who were the authors of his being. His father was a rake of the wildest description; his mother a violent woman, very unfit to improve the offspring of such a person. She would vent her spleen by loading her child with reproaches; and add, by way of securing their bad effect, that he would be as great a reprobate as his father. Thus did his parents embitter his nature: thus they embittered his memory of them, contradicted his beauty with deformity, and completed the mischances of his existence. Perhaps both of them had a goodness at heart, which had been equally perplexed. It is not that individuals are to blame, or that human nature is bad; but that experience has not yet made it wise enough. Animal beauty they had at least a sense of. In this our poet was conceived; but contradiction of all sorts was superadded, and he was born handsome, wilful,

and lame. A happy childhood might have corrected his evil tendencies; but he had it not; and the upshot was, that he spent an uneasy over-excited life, and that society have got an amusing book or two by his misfortunes. The books may even help to counteract the spreading of such a misfortune; and so far it may be better for society that he lived. But this is a rare case. Thousands of such mistakes are round about us, with nothing to show for them but complaint and unhappiness.

Lord Byron's face was handsome; eminently so in some respects. He had a mouth and chin fit for Apollo; and when I first knew him, there were both lightness and energy all over his aspect. But his countenance did not improve with age, and there were always some defects in it. The jaw was too big for the upper part. It had all the wilfulness of a despot in it. The animal predominated over the intellectual part of his head, inasmuch as the face altogether was large in proportion to the skull. The eyes also were set too near one another; and the nose, though handsome in itself, had the appearance when you saw it

closely in front, of being grafted on the face, rather than growing properly out of it. His person was very handsome, though terminating in lameness, and tending to fat and effeminacy; which makes me remember what a hostile fair one objected to him, namely, that he had little beard; a fault which, on the other hand, was thought by another lady, not hostile, to add to the divinity of his aspect,—*imberbis Apollo.* His lameness was only in one foot, the left; and it was so little visible to casual notice, that as he lounged about a room (which he did in such a manner as to screen it) it was hardly perceivable. But it was a real and even a sore lameness. Much walking upon it fevered and hurt it. It was a shrunken foot, a little twisted. This defect unquestionably mortified him exceedingly, and helped to put sarcasm and misanthropy into his taste of life. Unfortunately, the usual thoughtlessness of schoolboys made him feel it bitterly at Harrow. He would wake, and find his leg in a tub of water. The reader will see, in the correspondence at the end of this memoir, how he felt it, whenever it was libelled; and in

Italy, the only time I ever knew it mentioned, he did not like the subject, and hastened to change it. His handsome person so far rendered the misfortune greater, as it pictured to him all the occasions on which he might have figured in the eyes of company; and doubtless this was a great reason why he had no better address. On the other hand, instead of losing him any real regard or admiration, his lameness gave a touching character to both. Certainly no reader would have liked him, or woman loved him, the less, for the thought of this single contrast to his superiority. But the very defect had taught him to be impatient with deficiency. Good God! when I think of these things, and of the common weaknesses of society, as at present constituted, I feel as if I could shed tears over the most willing of my resentments, much more over the most unwilling, and such as I never intended to speak of; nor could any thing have induced me to give a portrait of Lord Byron and his infirmities, if I had not been able to say at the end of it, that his faults were not his own, and that we must seek the

causes of them in mistakes common to us all. What is delightful to us in his writings will still remain so, if we are wise; and what ought not to be, will not only cease to be perilous, but be useful. Faults which arise from an exuberant sociality, like those of Burns, may safely be left to themselves. They at once explain themselves by their natural candour, and carry an advantage with them; because any thing is advantageous in the long run to society, which tends to break up their selfishness. But doctrines, or half-doctrines, or whatever else they may be, which tend to throw individuals upon themselves, and overcast them at the same time with scorn and alienation, it is as well to see traced to their sources. In comparing notes, humanity gets wise; and certainly the wiser it gets, it will not be the less modest or humane, whether it has to find fault, or to criticise the fault-finder.

I believe if any body could have done good to Lord Byron, it was Goethe and his correspondence. It was a pity he did not live to have more of it. Goethe might possibly have enabled him, as he wished he could, "to know

himself," and do justice to the yearnings after the good and beautiful inseparable from the nature of genius. But the danger was, that he would have been influenced as much by the rank and reputation of that great man, as by the reconciling nobleness of his philosophy; and personal intercourse with him would have spoilt all. Lord Byron's nature was mixed up with too many sophistications to receive a proper impression from any man: and he would have been jealous, if he once took it in his head that the other was thought to be his superior.

Lord Byron had no conversation, properly speaking. He could not interchange ideas or information with you, as a man of letters is expected to do. His thoughts required the concentration of silence and study to bring them to a head; and they deposited the amount in the shape of a stanza. His acquaintance with books was very circumscribed. The same personal experience, however, upon which he very properly drew for his authorship, might have rendered him a companion more interesting by far than men who could talk better:

and the great reason why his conversation disappointed you was, not that he had not any thing to talk about, but that he was haunted with a perpetual affectation, and could not talk sincerely. It was by fits only that he spoke with any gravity, or made his extraordinary disclosures; and at no time did you well know what to believe. The rest was all quip and crank, not of the pleasantest kind, and equally distant from simplicity or wit. The best thing to say of it was, that he knew playfulness to be consistent with greatness; and the worst, that he thought every thing in him was great, even to his vulgarities.

Mr. Shelley said of him, that he never made you laugh to your own content. This, however, was said latterly, after my friend had been disappointed by a close intimacy. Mr. Shelley's opinion of his natural powers in every respect was great; and there is reason to believe, that Lord Byron never talked with any man to so much purpose as he did with him. He looked upon him as his most admiring listener; and probably was never less under the influence of affectation. If he could have

got rid of this and his title, he would have talked like a man; not like a mere man of the town, or a great spoilt schoolboy. It is not to be concluded, that his jokes were not now and then very happy, or that admirers of his Lordship, who paid him visits, did not often go away more admiring. I am speaking of his conversation in general, and of the impression it made upon you, compared with what was to be expected from a man of wit and experience.

He had a delicate white hand, of which he was proud; and he attracted attention to it by rings. He thought a hand of this description almost the only mark remaining now-a-days of a gentleman; of which it certainly is not, nor of a lady either; though a coarse one implies handiwork. He often appeared holding a handkerchief, upon which his jewelled fingers lay imbedded, as in a picture. He was as fond of fine linen as a quaker; and had the remnant of his hair oiled and trimmed with all the anxiety of a Sardanapalus.

The visible character to which this effeminacy gave rise appears to have indicated itself as early as his travels in the Levant, where the

Grand Signior is said to have taken him for a woman in disguise. But he had tastes of a more masculine description. He was fond of swimming to the last, and used to push out to a good distance in the Gulf of Genoa. He was also, as I have before mentioned, a good horseman; and he liked to have a great dog or two about him, which is not a habit observable in timid men. Yet I doubt greatly whether he was a man of courage. I suspect, that personal anxiety, coming upon a constitution unwisely treated, had no small hand in hastening his death in Greece.

The story of his bold behaviour at sea in a voyage to Sicily, and of Mr. Shelley's timidity, is just reversing what I conceive would have been the real state of the matter, had the voyage taken place. The account is an impudent fiction. Nevertheless, he volunteered voyages by sea, when he might have eschewed them: and yet the same man never got into a coach without being afraid. In short, he was the contradiction his father and mother had made him. To lump together some more of his personal habits, in the style of old Aubrey,

he spelt affectedly, swore somewhat, had the Northumbrian burr in his speech, did not like to see women eat, and would merrily say that he had another reason for not liking to dine with them; which was, that they always had the wings of the chicken.

For the rest,

> "Ask you why *Byron* broke through every rule?
> 'Twas all for fear the knaves should call him fool."

He has added another to the list of the Whartons and Buckinghams, though his vices were in one respect more prudent, his genius greater, and his end a great deal more lucky. Perverse from his birth, educated under personal disadvantages, debauched by ill companions, and perplexed between real and false pretensions, the injuries done to his nature were completed by a success, too great even for the genius he possessed; and as his life was never so unfortunate as when it appeared to be most otherwise, so nothing could happen more seasonably for him, or give him what he would most have desired under any other circumstances, than his death.

A variety of other recollections of Lord Byron have been suggested to me by the accounts of him hitherto published; which I accordingly proceed to notice. They are, for the most part, ludicrously erroneous; but the examination of them will furnish us with the truth. They may be divided into five classes: —those which really contain something both true and new respecting him; those that contain two or three old truths vamped up in a popular manner to sell; thirdly, criticisms upon his genius, written with more or less good faith; fourthly, compilations containing all that could be scraped together respecting him, true or false; and fifthly, pure impudent fictions.

Of the last class is an account of a pretended *Voyage to Sicily*, which does not contain a word of truth from beginning to end.

Of the fourth, the most conspicuous is, the *Life and Times*, a jovial farrago in four volumes, written by as unparticular a fellow as one should wish to see with a pair of scissors in his hand.

The best among the third is a volume by

Sir Egerton Brydges, entitled "Letters on the Character and Poetical Genius of Lord Byron." They are more elaborate than profound; but not without insight into the matter; nor uninformed, perhaps, by a certain sympathy with the aristocratical as well as poetical pretensions of the noble Bard; a feeling, of which his Lordship would have been quicker to accept the compliment, than acknowledge the reciprocity.

A "Life and Genius" by "Sir Cosmo Gordon," stood at the head of the second class, and was a quick, little, good-humoured supply for the market, remarkable for the conscientiousness of its material.

The only publications that contained any thing at once new and true respecting Lord Byron were, *Dallas's Recollections*, the *Conversations by Captain Medwin*, and Parry's and Gamba's Accounts of his *Last Days*. A good deal of the real character of his Lordship, though not always as the writer viewed it, may be gathered from most of them; particularly the first two. Parry's is a more respectable book, than the vulgar character of the man,

and his pot-house buffoonery upon Mr. Bentham, would lead us to suppose; and Conte Pietro Gamba is ever the gentleman, worthy of all credit. The frontispiece to Mr. Parry's book presents us with a whole-length figure of Lord Byron, very like his usual style of dress and appearance, after he had grown thin again. This portrait of him for his latter days (though rather in general aspect than countenance), the portrait of him by Phillips for his younger, and a full-length silhouette published by Ackermann, for the turn of his expression and figure when at the fattest, exhibit the three resemblances of him the most to be relied on. But "the Major's book" is that of an humble retainer, grateful for condescension; and Conte Pietro modestly professes to be nothing but an adherent.

Dallas, who was a sort of lay-priest, errs from being half-witted. He must have tired Lord Byron to death with blind beggings of the question, and solemn mistakes. The wild poet ran against him, and scattered his faculties. To the last he does not seem to have made up his mind, whether his Lordship was

Christian or Atheist. I can settle at least a part of that dilemma. Christian he certainly was not. He neither wrote nor talked as any Christian, in the ordinary sense of the word, would have done: and as to the rest, the strength of his belief probably varied according to his humour, and was at all times as undecided and uneasy, as the lights hitherto obtained by mere reason were calculated to render it. The companion, of whom he used to entertain the highest opinion, he took to be an Atheist. It is remarkable, that when at College, he had a similar respect for another. But I have known him, after the death of the former, and when he suspected that the opinion had not been reciprocal, reproach his memory with the doctrine.

The following is an instance of the way in which Mr. Dallas takes things for granted. "In vain," says he, "was Lord Byron led into the defiance of the sacred writings; there are passages in his letters and in his works, which show, that religion might have been in his soul. Could he cite the following lines and resist the force of them? It is true that he marks them

for the beauty of the verse, but no less for the sublimity of the conceptions; and I cannot but hope, that had he lived, he would have proved another instance of genius bowing to the power of truth.

> "Dim as the borrow'd beams of moon and stars
> To lonely, wandering, weary travellers,
> Is reason to the soul.—And as on high
> Those lonely fires discover but the sky,
> Not light us here; so reason's glimmering ray
> Was lent, not to assure our doubtful way,
> But guide us upwards to a better day.
> And as those nightly tapers disappear
> When day's bright lord ascends our hemisphere;
> So pale grows reason at religion's sight,
> So dies, and so dissolves, in supernatural light."
>
> DRYDEN—Quoted from *The Liberal.*

Now, the passage here quoted was quoted by myself, one of those "atheists and scoffers," according to Mr. Dallas, by whom "he was led into defiance of the sacred writings."

There is a favourite and foolish saying, "*Ex uno disce omnes*," which if Mr. Dallas were to be judged by, according to his fondness for such sayings, his whole book would be pronounced a parcel of lies.

Captain Medwin quotes the saying, and makes an unfounded assertion at one and the same time. "To give the reader," says he, "an idea of the stories circulated and believed about Lord Byron, I will state one, as a specimen of the rest, which I heard the other day:—

"'Lord Byron, who is an execrably bad horseman, was riding one evening in the Brenta, spouting 'Metastasio;' a Venetian, passing in a close carriage at the time, laughed at his bad Italian; upon which his Lordship horsewhipped him, and threw a card in at the window. The nobleman took no notice of the insult.'—Lord Byron was an excellent horseman, never read a line of 'Metastasio,' and pronounced Italian like a native. He must have been remarkably ingenious to horsewhip in a *close carriage*, and find a nobleman who pocketed the affront! But '*ex uno disce omnes*.'" Vol. i.

Now that Lord Byron was an excellent horseman, is true:—that he never read a line of "Metastasio," I doubt, and should have doubted it, if he had said as much; for "Me-

tastasio," an author who had obtained great reputation with no very great genius, was precisely the sort of man to pique his curiosity; and he must often have fallen in his way:—but that he "pronounced Italian like a native," I deny without fear of contradiction from any body who is at all acquainted with that language. He spoke it fluently; but his pronunciation was as poor as that of most foreigners, and worse than many; for he scarcely opened his mouth.

Captain Medwin afterwards tells us that the noble poet's "voice had a flexibility, a variety in its tones, a power and a pathos beyond any I ever heard."—This is harmless, as an instance of the effect which his Lordship had upon the Captain; but, from all I ever heard of it, I should form a very different judgment. His voice, as far as I was acquainted with it, though not incapable of loudness, nor unmelodious in its deeper tones, was confined. He made an effort when he threw it out. The sound of it in ordinary, except when he laughed, was pretty and lugubrious. He spoke inwardly, and slurred over his syllables, perhaps in order

to hide the *burr*. In short, it was as much the reverse of any thing various and powerful, as his enunciation was of any thing articulate. But I do not know what passion might have made of it. The few times I saw him in a state of violent emotion, it was lower than ever. I can imagine him to have been loud in reciting a declamation, if he chose to be so. He could be loud in singing; and he then threw out at once the best and most powerful tones in his voice; but the effect (as I have already described it) had always an appearance of effort. After all, there may have been greater strength in his voice than it was my chance to witness; but the "flexibility," and the "variety of tones," to say nothing of the pathos, were assuredly in the Captain's imagination.

Next comes a mistake on a more painful subject. Captain Medwin, in describing the exhumation of Mr. Shelley's remains, has the following passage:—"As a foreground to this picture appeared as extraordinary a group. Lord Byron and Mr. Trelawney were seen standing over the burning pile, with some of

the soldiers of the guard; and Leigh Hunt, whose feelings and nerves could not carry him through the scene of horror, lying back in the carriage,—the four post-horses ready to drop with the intensity of the noon-day sun."—I have noticed this misrepresentation before; but will now do it more at length. Lord Byron was not present at this scene. He went thither in his carriage, and I was with him; but on getting out, he studiously kept aloof, and was not in sight while the melancholy proceedings took place. With regard to myself, "my feelings and nerves," however they might have suffered, would have carried me through any thing where Mr. Shelley was concerned, provided it was necessary. They have never failed me on very trying occasions. But my assistance was not required: there were no feelings on the part of another to stand by and soothe; and though I did not "lie back" in the carriage, (as is here made out for the sake of effect,) I confess I could not voluntarily witness the thrustings in of the spade and pick-axe upon the unburied body of my friend, and have the chance of hearing them strike against

his skull, as they actually did. Let me hasten from this subject.

According to Captain Medwin, Lord Byron said of the writer of these pages, that till his voyage to Italy he "had never been ten miles from St. Paul's." The Captain ought to have known enough of his Lordship's random way of talking, not to take for granted every thing that he chose to report of another. I had never been out of England before; except, when a child, to the coast of France; but I had perhaps seen as much of my native country as most persons educated in town. I had been in various parts of it, from Devonshire to Yorkshire. I merely mention these things to show what idle assertions Lord Byron would repeat, and how gravely the Captain would echo them. If every body mentioned in his work, were thus to deduct from it what he knows to be untrue, how much would remain uncontradicted?

"I never met with any man who shines so much in conversation." That is to say, Captain Medwin never met before with a lord so much the rage. He says a little afterwards,

that his Lordship "never showed the author," and that he "prided himself most on being a man of the world and of fashion;"—that is, to Captain Medwin; whose admiration, he saw, ran to that side of things. The truth is, as I have before stated, that he had no conversation in the higher sense of the word, owing to these perpetual affectations; but instead of never showing the author on that account, he never forgot it. His sole object was to have an admiring report of himself, as a genius, who could be lord, author, or what he pleased. "His anecdotes," says Medwin, "of life and living characters were inexhaustible." This was true, if you chose to listen to them, and to take every thing he said for granted; but every body was not prepared, like the Captain, to be thankful for stories of the noble Lord and all his acquaintances, male and female.

"Miserly in trifles—*about to lavish his whole fortune on the Greeks*" (oh happy listener!)—"to-day diminishing his stud—to-morrow taking a large family *under his roof*" (an ingenious nicety!), or giving 1000*l.* for a yacht" (a sum which it very much surprised and vexed

him to be charged); "dining for a few Pauls when alone—spending hundreds when he has friends; '*Nil fuit unquam,*' says the gallant and classical officer, '*sic impar sibi.*'"

But enough of Captain Medwin, his Latin, and his Greek, for he also quotes Greek, or, as he pleasantly says, "adapts" it; that is—But I shall be making a sorry criticism of a sorry matter. I had the pleasure of a visit from Captain Medwin while "under the roof" that he speaks of, and should have said nothing calculated to disturb the innocence of his *politesse,* had he abstained from repeating scandals respecting women, and not taken upon himself to criticise the views and "philosophy" of Mr. Shelley; a man of whom he was qualified to know still less than of Lord Byron. With the cautions here afforded to the reader, a better idea of his Lordship may certainly be drawn from his account than from any other. The warmth of his homage drew out the noble Bard on some points upon which he would have been cautious of committing himself with a less wholesale admirer; and not the least curious

part of the picture, is this mutual excess of their position.

An article was written in "The Westminster Review" (Medwin says, by Mr. Hobhouse) to show that the Conversations were altogether unworthy of credit. There are doubtless many inaccuracies in the latter; but the spirit remains undoubted; and the author of the criticism was only vexed that such was the fact. He assumes, that Lord Byron could not have made this or that statement to Captain Medwin, because the statement was erroneous or untrue; but an anonymous author has no right to be believed in preference to one who speaks in his own name: there is nothing to show that Mr. Hobhouse might not have been as mistaken about a date or an epigram as Mr. Medwin; and when we find him giving us his own version of a fact, and Mr. Medwin asserting that Lord Byron gave him another, the only impression left upon the mind of any body who knew his Lordship is, that the fault most probably lay in the loose corners of the noble Poet's vivacity. Such is the impression

made upon the author of an unpublished Letter to Mr. Hobhouse, which has been shown me in print; and he had a right to it. The reviewer, to my knowledge, is mistaken upon some points, as well as the person he reviews. The assumption, that nobody can know any thing about Lord Byron but two or three persons who were conversant with him for a certain space of time, and whom he spoke of with as little ceremony, and would hardly treat with more confidence than he did hundred others, is ludicrous; and can only end, as the criticism has done, in doing no good either to him or them.

The *Life and Times* is a curiosity, if it were only for the title. But, in contradicting its heap of absurdities, some more truths will come out for the reader's entertainment. The title-page is worth repeating, as a full-blown specimen of this sort of flourishing.

"The LIFE, WRITINGS, OPINIONS, and TIMES of the RIGHT HON. GEORGE GORDON NOEL BYRON, LORD BYRON; including, in its most extensive biography, anecdotes and memoirs of the lives

of the most eminent and eccentric, public and noble characters and courtiers of the present polished and enlightened Age and Court of His Majesty King George the Fourth. In the course of the biography are also separately given copious recollections of the lately destroyed MS., originally intended for posthumous publication, and entitled, Memoirs of My Own Life and Times. By the Right Hon. Lord Byron.

"CREDE BYRON." *Motto of the Byron Family.*

"I have, in this rough work, shaped out a man
Whom this beneath world doth embrace and hug
With amplest entertainment: my free drift
Halts not particularly, but moves itself
In a wide sea of wax; no levelled malice
Infects one comma in the course I hold,
But flies an eagle flight, bold and forth-on
Leaving no track behind."

SHAKSPEARE, *Timon of Athens.*

By an English Gentleman in the Greek Military Service, and Comrade of his Lordship. Compiled from documents, and from long personal acquaintance. In Three Volumes. Vol. I.

London: Matthew Iley, Somerset-street, Portman-square. MDCCCXXV.

There may be, it seems, enthusiasm in every thing, even in book-making. Here is a volume of sound in the very types. They are proportioned to the impression intended to be made on the sensorium. We have the LIFE, WRITINGS, OPINIONS, and TIMES of LORD BYRON very large: then, after a proper crowd of polite capitals, comes the "AGE AND COURT OF HIS MAJESTY KING GEORGE THE FOURTH," with its greatness reasonably diminished; then "Copious Recollections of the lately destroyed MS., originally intended for posthumous publication," very nice and particular; then a flourish of trumpets again in the size of the "RIGHT HON. LORD BYRON," a title to admiration which cannot be too often repeated; after which, we have the Family Motto, asking and receiving trust; then the motto from Shakspeare, really good; and the procession is closed by the Author in person, who in modest capitals announces himself as an English Gentleman, a comrade of his Lord-

ship, who has judiciously entered into the Greek military service, and, of course, does not like to be known. It would have hurt the feelings of the Sultan; whom he is doubtless intimate with, his Lordship once having spoken with that personage. The writer concludes with informing us, if we choose to overhear him (for his types on this occasion amount to a whisper), that all this world of information is "compiled from authentic documents, and from long personal acquaintance;" and our gratitude is consummated by the information, that we have three volumes of it; a whole paradise of knowledge.

In a preface full of mistakes, and containing a remarkable mixture of credulity and puffing, the author discusses the right of Lord Byron's connexions to suppress his Memoirs; which right he denies. He says that his Lordship was public property; that the work was bequeathed by him to posterity; and that no consideration for individuals ought to have withheld it. Nobody will agree with this, except persons eager at all hazards to gratify their curiosity, and there is one hazard which

would stop even them:—viz. the mention of themselves. The present times have remarkably exemplified the old remark, that there are none so furious at being spoken ill of, as those who delight to hear scandal of others. The question respecting the publication of Lord Byron's auto-biography is, not whether posterity, that is, our children's children, might not have a right to it, if it could be recovered, which it probably will; but whether the curiosity of his contemporaries had a right to be gratified at the hazard of wounding the feelings and risking the peace and reputation of the living; all this, too, on the *ipse dixit* of a man of violent impulses, who had a false opinion of human nature, and little cared what feelings he wounded, where his own mortification, or wit, or love of display, was concerned. In the course of time, when the author becomes better known, and a calmer estimate can be formed both of his merits and mistakes, readers may take up such a book with no hurt at all to the feelings of living persons, and perhaps no injustice to those who are dead. Their knowledge of the writer would qualify what he said

of them; and on intimate acquaintance with himself, beyond what he intended (for such is the inevitable betrayal of all auto-biographies), might repay the world for any injustice hazarded on that score. They would have the benefit accruing from the anatomy of an extraordinary individual. For I hold it to be certain, that an exposition of the real feelings and opinions of any body superior to the ordinary run of mankind, would serve to strike out new lights for the conduct and improvement of the human race, even, perhaps, from what were considered his errors. The errors of one generation may turn out to be the virtues of another; just as the virtue of one (religious intolerance for example) may turn out to be an error. I should like to know every particle of the lives of Plato and Socrates, of Brutus and of Cæsar and Marcus Aurelius, of Dante and Ariosto, of such men as Mazarin and De Retz, of Henry the Fourth, of Chaucer, Shakspeare, and Milton, of Pope and Swift; and the more particularly, the more they differed in their conduct from the times they lived in. It is said, that great men resemble little men in

their passions; but perhaps they are not so much mistaken as little men in the nature of them, and in the greater or less quantity of judgment with which they are treated by society; and, at all events, we are more likely to be told something by the passions that accompany the study of a man's self, than by those of ignorance and imitation.

"The subject of these Memoirs," says our author of the "Life and Times," "was descended from a family which was renowned from the period of the Conquest; several illustrious persons having figured in the history of England under the name of *Buron*, *Biron*, or *Byron*, which they assumed indiscriminately."

This reminds me of the disputes respecting Lord Byron's pronunciation of his name; some maintaining that he called it By̆ron, with a short *y*, others Bȳron with a long one. The truth is, he pronounced it both ways, but in general the former. Captain Medwin says, that in speaking of Lady Byron, he pronounced it "Byrn;" but this is a mistake. The Captain's ear might not have discerned the second vowel,

but it was discernible to others. "Byrn," is *Byron,* pronounced shortly, with the northern burr. But he called himself Byron sometimes; and the Italians always called him so; at least as nearly as they could. They made it *Bairon,* as I have noticed in Madame Guiccioli. Lord Byron was proud of his name, and he had reason to be so. He was also not unwilling to be reminded of his namesake in Shakspeare, and used to mention with pleasure the quotation attributed to Mr. Bowles:

> "Biron they call him; but a merrier man,
> Within the limits of becoming mirth,
> I never knew.
> His eye begets occasion for his wit,
> While his apt tongue, conceit's expositor," &c.

I quote from memory, and cannot go on; but the passage was not applicable. Lord Byron was sometimes witty in conversation, often merry, oftener commonplace. Conversation, as I have said more than once, was by no means his talent; and none would have thought it so, who had been used to better.

Our author gives us to understand, that Lord Byron did not succeed so well in making love, as ladies succeeded in making love to him. This is true, for reasons which have been explained. But they do not apply to his early love for his cousin Miss Chaworth, which was that of an imaginative boy taking a boyish impulse for a serious passion, and fancying himself bound to be silent and sorrowing. He would have been in love with any other girl that happened to be near him, and have lost her by the same mistake. It was the *Author's* first error,—a mistake out of book. But he imagined the passion, or has since shown that he could imagine it, beautifully, (see his poem of the "Dream"); and if the lady had been kind, she might probably have warmed his heart into real love, and saved him (as he suspected she might) many a cruel mistake afterwards. As to his literature being in the way, our author is sadly out in his ponderings on that matter:—

"It is a weakness" (he tells us) "peculiar to the geniuses of imagination, both male and

female, to fancy that they must be *themselves* the objects of that passion which they so fervently describe, whatever may be their personal defects. Literary persons are, however, from their very pursuits, the least qualified to shine in the courts of love. One captain in the Guards will do more execution in an hour with his small *shot* (small talk) than all the literati of the Chapter Coffee House can effect with their critical great guns in twelve months. Sappho was reduced to take a flying leap to get rid of her disappointed passion. Pope was jeered at by Lady Mary Wortley Montague, and fascinating Jack Musters was too much for poor Lord Byron. *De gustibus nil disputandum.* In fact, a wise man in love becomes a mere fool; and a Cymon becomes intelligent in the presence of his beloved Iphigène."

What sort of lovers the Literati of the "Chapter Coffee House" may be, it is impossible to say; but that their literature (if worth any thing) is no obstruction to their love-making, may be seen by the histories of the literati

of other coffee-houses, to wit, the Steeles, and Congreves, and Vanbrughs of old. Vanbrugh was a Captain of the Guards, and a favourite of the ladies; but do we suppose that he was less a favourite than any other Captain, because he could talk better, and because his small shot was good as well as small? Sappho was a great poetess; but she might have set her heart upon a person incapable of understanding her, or have exhibited a violence and self-will which belonged to her temperament and not to her wit. One example, or ten, says nothing against the universal opinion in favour of the union of wit and gallantry, and of the effect that even the reputation of wit has upon the fair sex. Pope was deformed, and his letters to Lady Mary partook of the crookedness of which he was conscious. He had not the heart to give his talents fair play, and write in a straightforward manner; and she, being surrounded by handsome wits, and gay fellows about Court, with all their faculties fresh upon them, was not likely to select for her gallant the least handsome of them all, a little misgiving in-

valid. Lord Byron did not fail, because he was wise or witty, or because a wise man is a fool in love, still less because every fool has the luck of Cymon; but because he was splenetic and moody, and very different from what a man of his wit ought to have been. Does our speculative friend think that the Rochesters and Buckinghams always failed in their gallantry?

In the note to p. 98, vol. I. a suspicion is expressed, that Lord Byron and Mr. Hobhouse planned and executed the insurrection of the Greeks nearly twenty years back! The subtle nod in Italics by which this discovery is conveyed to us, is really agreeable, and gives one a favourable opinion of the author's good-natured credulity.

"Circumstances," says Lord Byron, "*of little consequence to mention*,* led Mr. Hobhouse and myself into that country, before we

* These "circumstances of little consequence," in which the author has found something of the "utmost consequence," were probably nothing more than a fit of caprice, or the pursuit of a pretty face, or the chances attendant upon navigation. He seems to think that his hero could not put on his hat, but the universe had something to do with it.

visited any other part of the Ottoman dominions: and, with the exception of Major Leake, then officially resident at Joannina, no other Englishmen have ever advanced beyond the capital into the interior, as that gentleman very lately assured me. Ali Pacha was at that time (1809) carrying on war against Ibrahim Pacha, whom he had driven to Berat, a strong fortress, which he was then besieging. On our arrival at Joannina, we were invited to Tepelene, his Highness's birth-place, and favourite Serai, only one day's journey from Berat; at this juncture the Vizier made it his head-quarters." The author adds, in a note, "It seems extremely probable, that this expression was made use of to conceal the real purport of the journey, as Ali Pacha's subsequent rupture with the Porte was the signal for the breaking out of the Greek insurrection; if so, the journey was of the *utmost consequence* to the cause of Greece."

"A most material question," says he, "now arises:—What could induce two young men of independent fortune to take such a journey

by sea and land, and to brave the wilds and banditti of Albania, as rude a country as the interior of Africa, to pay a visit to an infidel, a barbarian, a monster, execrable for every species of villany, and reeking with blood ?"

Why, because he *was* a monster and a show, and because others had travelled in Greece before, especially men from the Universities. Has not our friend learnt, from his intimacy with courts and people of fashion, that nothing is such a godsend to gentlemen full of ennui and fond of notoriety, as a spectacle of any sort, the more monstrous the better ? And does he not know, that if Ali had come to the British metropolis, he would have been the rage for the season, and asked out by every great person that could venture on such a liberty, to see how such a very decapitating person drank his coffee and displayed his diamonds ? Not to know this, argues him, I fear, still more unknown than he wishes to be. Joannina, the Pacha's capital, was accounted the metropolis of Modern Greece: and besides, Lord Byron, though young, had had expe-

rience enough to begin to philosophize; and he probably thought, that many a meek personage whom he had known in England would have been as savage as Ali, had he been born and bred in the same manner; for Ali was a very soft-spoken gentleman, as quiet as Claverhouse; and, for aught we know, would have made a capital writer in a Scotch magazine.

"Thus," quoth our friend, after quoting a couple of stanzas from Childe Harold,—"thus did this *apostle of liberty* preach to the Greeks through eighteen stanzas, and it should seem that neither his planning nor his preaching was in vain." Poor Lord Byron! He would have been a very unwilling apostle, had he known he was also to be a martyr. He had as little real regard for liberty, as Alfieri, or any other proud man of rank; but he had an impatience of any despotism not his own; he had also a great love of fame; and even in that is to be found a link with the social affections, very capable of being turned to good account, if circumstances are favourable.

Speaking of an alleged residence in the island of Mytilene, which Lord Byron denied

in a public letter, the author says, "The account is circumstantial; the denial in the letter is positive. If the latter were really written by Lord Byron, he abominated falsehood, and implicit confidence should be placed in his assertion." Of the residence in the island of Mytilene I know nothing; but as to the abomination of falsehood, Lord Byron once gave a list of the Englishmen he had seen since he left England, and told the public that the list was complete. Mr. Shelley's name was not in it, and he had seen Mr. Shelley. He had been in habits of intercourse with him.

The mention of Mr. Nathan, the composer, at p. 212, reminds me, that I was present one day in Piccadilly, when that gentleman came to give Lord Byron a specimen of his "Hebrew Melodies." The noble Bard, who was then in the middle of that unpleasant business about his wife, asked him for the one respecting Herod and Mariamne, which he listened to with an air of romantic regret. This was a sort of effect that he liked; nor would it have turned to ill account, if his rank and worldly connexions could have let him alone. In the

very pretence there was a love of something, that might have become real. Mr. Nathan had a fine head; and made the grand piano-forte shake like a nut-shell, under the vehemence of his inspiration.

I remember Polidori also, who is mentioned at p. 220. He was the son of Polidori, a teacher of Italian, who made some good translations from Milton. Lord Byron engaged the young Doctor to accompany him to Greece. He came in one day, and called about him in a strange manner for water and a towel. Not knowing who he was, I was puzzled to think who it could be, that made himself thus cavalierly at home. Lord Byron looked disconcerted, but was quite mild and acquiescent. I have seen him submit in a similar way to others who did not scruple to avail themselves of this weakness. I have known him even hastily secrete a paper, which he had promised them perhaps not to show. Polidori and he used afterwards to have loud disputes, as if they were equals. He was a foolish boasting fellow, not perhaps without disease in his blood; and came to an impatient end.

Among the hostile criticisms upon Lord Byron, our author quotes one from "Blackwood's Magazine." The reader remembers the passage in Goldsmith's "Citizen of the World," where a soldier, a prisoner for debt, and a porter, are deprecating the consequences of a French invasion. The porter says, the French are a parcel of slaves, fit only to carry burdens; the prisoner, that they have no liberty; and the soldier wonders what will become of "our religion."—"May the devil sink me into flames," (such, quoth the Citizen of the World, was the solemnity of his adjuration)—"may the devil sink me into flames, if I can think, my lads, what is to become of our religion." Mr. Blackwood was agitated in like manner respecting the shocking want of piety and Christian charity discernible in his Lordship.

"It has been sufficiently manifest," says he, "that *this man* is devoid of religion." (Sir Walter, by the bye, of "Beacon" fame, must be acquitted of having known any thing of this passage, where a lord is designated so ignobly.) "At times, indeed," pursues Mr. Blackwood, "the power and presence of the

Deity, as speaking in the sterner wakings of the elements, seems to force some momentary consciousness of their existence into his labouring breast; a spirit into which there breathes so much of the divine, cannot always resist the majesty of its Maker: but of true religion, terror is a small part; and of all religion, that founded on mere terror is the least worthy of such a man as Byron. We may look in vain, through all his works, for the slightest evidence that his soul had ever listened to the *gentle voice* of his oracles. His understanding has been subdued into conviction by some passing cloud; but his heart has never been touched. He has never written one line that savours of the spirit of *meekness*."

Then follows something about charity, and clay idols, and brutal outrages of all the best feelings; and Mr. Blackwood, having finished his sermon, retires to count his money, his ribaldry, and his kicks.

Our book-making and best-of-every-thing-making author puts as much faith in the celebrated *Farewell* to Lady Byron, as if he had been one of the numerous married ladies who

wondered how any body could be cruel to the writer of such charming verses. There never was a greater instance of Lord Byron's authorship and love of publicity than that very poem. He sat down to *imagine* what a husband might say, who had really loved his wife, to a wife who had really loved him; and he said it so well, that one regrets he had not been encouraged, when younger, to feel the genuine passion. But the verses were nothing more. There was no true love on either side, or (without meaning to liken the two modes of conduct) neither could have behaved to the other as both did afterwards. People may say bitter things, who love; the things may even be the bitterer at the moment, because they cannot endure the very dispute that occasions them. Unkind things may be said, precisely because we do not mean them, and because we like to flatter ourselves with observing their effect upon the beloved object. But real lovers do not precede their union with a doubting courtship; still less do they follow it with premature differences, with a hasty separation, with public libels on one side, and unbroken inattention on

the other. It is best, surely, that there should have been no love in the case; and being no love, it was best that the union should be put an end to. As to what a man says on his death-bed, we are first to be certain that he did say it; and next, we are to think what induces him to say it, and whether it is as likely to be his strength as his weakness. Besides, at that affecting moment, a man may feel a tenderness towards all whom he is going to leave, especially those with whom he has been conversant. The writer of the "Life and Times" says, that Lord Byron in his last moments was frequently bursting forth into most affectionate exclamations of "My dear wife! my dear child!" Fletcher, in his narrative, says nothing of the epithet bestowed on the former; and this good-humoured domestic was as believable, I dare say, as any man, when he was not taking himself for a Leporello. I would not be thought to speak lightly of such an occasion, or to speak of it without necessity—quite the reverse. The fact is, that all questions connected with love and marriage are of far deeper concernment, and will one day

be thought so, than to suffer any person who has been deeply struck with them, to pass over their consideration at any time, out of fear of being mistaken by the vulgar.

A great many stories are related of Lord Byron in the "Life and Times," for which there is no authority; and unluckily, when a reader meets with such as he knows to be untrue, all the rest go for nothing. In the following account, for instance, of Madame Guiccioli and her family, there is scarcely a word of truth.

"The Countess of G—— has occasioned some noise, both in Italy and England; all the romantic tales of his Lordship taking her out of a convent are fictions; she is no subject for a nunnery. Her father is at the head of an ancient Roman family, much reduced in its fortunes: he let out his palace for their support, and Lord Byron by chance occupied it when his daughter was given in marriage to Count G——, an officer poor in every thing but titles. Lord B—— made the bride a liberal present of jewels, and in a short time he became the *locum tenens* of the bridegroom.

An amicable arrangement was made; the Count set off to join the army at Naples, newly caparisoned, and the Countess remained under the roof of the noble Lord, where her father acts as regulator of the household. She is a lovely woman, not more than twenty-two years of age; of a gay, volatile disposition; rides like an Amazon, and fishes, hunts, and shoots with his Lordship. Nature appears to have formed them for each other. She is beloved by all the domestics, and is friendly to every one that wants her aid. She speaks English with propriety, and possesses many accomplishments."

The author here quoted by our friend of the "Life and Times," proceeds to give a marvellous account of a sail from Venice to Ithaca, and of the Countess's pursuit of her noble lover in a small boat, in which, with no other company than a boy, she was tossed about for three days and two nights!

Such are the fictions received into a work professing to be a "full, true, and particular account." It is added in a note, that "Count G—— was actually with Lord Byron when he

died, and was one of the committee of four persons appointed by Maurocordato to take care of his property." Here Count Pietro Gamba, the brother of the lady, is confounded with the Cavaliere Guiccioli her husband. Count Gamba, the father, was not of a Roman, but a Ravenna family. For the liberal present, or any other present, of jewels, made by Lord Byron to the bride,—*credat Christianus,*—for nothing but Christian charity can do it; and as to the lady's accomplishments, male as well as female,—hunting, and shooting, and speaking English,—the writer might as well have said, that the boarding-school young ladies in England all go out hunting every morning, and speak Latin to the whippers-in.

But intelligent men, in the very act of discrediting fictions respecting Lord Byron, have shown a tendency to blow up every little spark of their own fancy into a flame and a lustre. M. Beyle, the author of some works justly esteemed, a very sprightly and sometimes no unprofound writer, has given an excellent sketch of Lord Byron, painted from the life, in the midst of which he introduces the following grotesques:—

"He can speak the ancient Greek, the modern Greek, and the Arabian." Of "the Arabian" he did not know a syllable. At least if he did, I think I should have heard of it during my intercourse with him. Besides, where was he to pick it up? Probably he knew a few words of the Maltese jargon. Modern Greek he knew more of, and might have spoken a little, when he was in Greece,—about as much, perhaps, as ordinary travellers in Italy speak Italian. With the ancient language he was so little conversant, that I doubt whether he could read "Anacreon" without the help of a dictionary. He had lost it, after he left Harrow, as I think he somewhere confesses. He was far from familiar even with any of the Latin writers. It might be said of him with regard to the dead languages, as it was of Shakspeare (and he would have forgiven the truth for the sake of the comparison), that he had "little Latin, and less Greek." I have little of them myself, having suffered them to slip from me in like manner; but what I do know, I think I know better than he did; and this is saying nothing either to his advantage or mine. I mention

this, lest the reader, from what I have said of his want of learning, should receive an undue impression in favour of my own, or think I intended it. Lord Byron, to the best of my recollection, never quoted an ancient author to me but once; which, by-the-way, reminds me of a curious evidence of the childish temper in which he used to indulge himself, to a degree hardly credible. I told him one day, that his major-domo, Lega, had been quoting Latin to me. He said with all the look of a little boy who has missed a piece of flattery or plum-pudding, "Did he? He never quoted Latin to me." This was "baby Byron," as his sister called him. His mistakes in quantity,—such as his calling redivīvus, redīvivus—were less evidences perhaps of his want of scholarship, where the word was as common in poetry. Our villainous way of reading Latin and Greek verses, with a contempt of short and long that would have made an ancient split his sides, excuses mistakes of this kind, even in a lover of Horace, not very learned. In short, it would be difficult, in these days of quotations and indexes, to pronounce whether a man was

a real scholar or not, unless one has lived with him. Mr. Hobhouse, who writes himself A. M., and loaded his mercurial friend with whole bales of comment, once contended with me, that the accent upon the word *Rimini* ought to be upon the second syllable, instead of the first;—a comfortable piece of information to give a man who had just been using the word in public the other way! I had not however been so foolish as to subject myself to the chance of these good-natured suggestions. I had made surety doubly sure by consulting Lucan, and to him I referred my critic, who was convinced and happy.*

Our author writes like a man of sense on the mistakes committed by Mr. Bowles during the Pope controversy; but with all due deference to the genius of Mr. Campbell, who, though something better than a critic, has written a volume of criticism full of beauties,†—and of Lord Byron, who, though an extraordinary

* "Vicinumque minax invadit Ariminum, ut ignes
Solis Lucifero fugiebant astra relicto."—*Pharsalia*, lib. i.

† The First Volume of the Specimens of British Poets.

person, was no critic at all,—the only paper that went to the heart of that subject was written by Mr. Hazlitt, in "The London Magazine." All the others, like the persons disputing about the cameleon, were at once right and wrong. Lord Byron thought, or pretended to think, that people meant to say Pope was no poet; and in justly vindicating him from that charge, real or supposed, he lost sight of the limits between one kind of poetry and another. Mr. Bowles, on the other hand, in trying to make out that the two kinds had nothing in common, confounded materials with the use of them; and forgot the very soul of poetry he was contending for, in subjecting it to every image it took up. According to him, Nature did not include Art; and a great poet could not handle his stick or his gloves with impunity. But see all this question admirably disentangled, and wound up, in the article by Mr. Hazlitt. As to Pope's moral character, Mr. Bowles was ridiculous, and something worse. He there sadly forgot both his nature and his art: and only ended with proving himself as inferior to Pope in a social light, not-

withstanding his ethics, as he is to him in the amount of his poetry, notwithstanding his poetics.

It is unnecessary to contradict the numberless idle tales which our author proceeds to relate respecting Lord Byron's adventures. Some of the scenes in which they are laid, his Lordship never beheld; and such of the adventures as have a foundation in truth, are mixed up with the most ridiculous fables. Every thing which happens to have come under my own knowledge, is sure to be thus falsified. I do not believe that the compiler wished to say any thing untrue; but he takes care to doubt only what tells against his hero, and swallows implicitly every thing else. On both accounts he is repeatedly committing himself. His scepticism is as warm as his credulity, and gets him into as great mistakes. For instance, from denying that the following verses were sent to Lady Byron (which I believe as little as he does), he proceeds to abuse what he would otherwise have admired, and discovers that the verses themselves were not written by Lord

Byron, which they certainly were. His Lordship repeated them to me himself.

"The reader," says "The Life and Times," "will recollect, that the marriage of Lord and Lady Byron took place on the 2d of January, 1815, and, *if* we may believe the 'Literary Gazette,' his Lordship, on the 2d of January, 1821, sent Lady Byron the following epigram :—

'This day of all hath surely done
Its worst to me and you ;
'Tis now six years since we were one,
And five since we were two.'

"The reader," continues our biographer, "may choose whether he will believe that Lord Byron could be guilty of so cruel and unmanly an insult, or that some drivelling scribbler has attempted to palm his own Grub-street wit upon the proprietor of 'The Literary Gazette,' as a genuine effusion of the noble Bard. Lord Byron once patronized, but ever afterwards turned his back upon 'The Literary Gazette,' which may account for its enmity."

Now the epigram is not Grub-street wit, and, as the reader has seen, was really the production of the "noble Bard." The worst that can be said of it, is the evidence it affords of the way in which he was accustomed to indulge his petulance on a subject he had better have let alone, and his carelessness in letting it get abroad. I remember jokes of his upon others, which I certainly shall not suffer to transpire, and which he used to defend, by saying that the parties joked in the same manner upon him.

"Now this is worshipful society."

Our author ventures to think that Lord Byron failed in the drama. His Lordship had a shrewd suspicion of it himself. Speaking one day of a manuscript tragedy of mine, which in our dearth of books he had asked to read, he said he thought it the next best thing I had written, to the "Story of Rimini." I said, I wished I could think any thing favourable of it, even by courtesy; but I could not. I was quite sure that I had no faculty for the drama. He reflected upon this; and

observed in an under-tone between question and no-question,—"Perhaps I have not succeeded in the drama myself." I took advantage of the ambiguity of the tone, to make an answer. Had a stranger been present, he might have thought his remark a challenge to be candid, and looked upon my silence as not paying it sufficient honour. I should have thought so once myself; but the time for that delusion was past. Lord Byron was always acting, even when he capriciously spoke the truth. He had hampered himself with sophistications, till he could not break through them; and would have resented the attempt to extricate him, as an assumption of superiority.

At p. 145, vol. ii. is the extraordinary picture I have alluded to respecting an alleged quarrel of mine with Lord Byron. Our author relates it in the following easy and assured style:—

"At Pisa," quoth he, "an unfortunate difference took place between Lord Byron and Mr. Leigh Hunt, of which the following particulars have been derived from one of the

parties concerned. 'Parisina' was considered by Lord Byron as the best of all his minor poems; in fact, it was the only one he ever could be induced to speak of in company; and when he did so, it was in language that silenced all contradiction: it *was* so,—and it *must* be so, seemed to be the sovereign pleasure of him whose word no man dared to doubt, who wished to retain any particle of his favour. Mr. Snelgrove, Lieutenant of l'Eclair, was at Leghorn, and of course a frequent attendant at Pisa at the time that Mr. Leigh Hunt was the constant companion of his Lordship. He noticed him on every occasion, and made him at last so far forget himself, that he considered he had power and ability to criticise the works of his great benefactor. He presumed to censure 'Parisina;' and Mr. Dodd, the Deputy Consul (formerly clerk to Captain Rowley) traced to the pen of Leigh Hunt some criticisms that had appeared in the *Livourna Gazette* and *Lucca* newspaper. Mr. Hunt ought to have been aware how jealous an author is of the darling offspring of his muse, and he ought to

have spared the feelings, or, if he pleases, the weaknesses of his friend and benefactor. But wits, like game-cocks, never spare each other. From this time, our informant states, that Lord Byron never saw or spoke to Mr. Leigh Hunt, or any of his connexions."

It is worth while to take this grave falsehood to pieces for the sake of the grave truths with which every particle of it can be set aside.

"At Pisa an unfortunate difference took place between Lord Byron and Mr. Leigh Hunt."

There was no difference.

"The following particulars have been derived from one of the parties concerned."

There was no party concerned, except in the invention of the story. Who that was, I cannot say.

"Parisina was considered by Lord Byron as the best of all his minor poems; in fact, it was the only one that he could ever be induced to speak of in company."

By no means. His companions have heard him speak of the others hundreds of times.

"And when he did so, it was in language

that silenced all contradiction: it *was* so,—and it *must* be so, seemed to be the sovereign pleasure of him whose word no man dared to doubt, who wished to retain any particle of his favours."

A pretty notion of the tenure by which his friendship was to be held! And a still prettier specimen of the sort of company that affected to be with him on this occasion!

"Mr. Snelgrove, Lieutenant of l'Eclair, was at Leghorn, and *of course* a frequent attendant at Pisa, at the time that Mr. Leigh Hunt was the constant companion of his Lordship."

Why "of course?" Were all the visitors at Leghorn *duiquitous* of necessity? Or did every man who happened to visit Leghorn at that time, become, as a matter of course, qualified to know every thing respecting Lord Byron and his friends! If it is meant to be said, that the story comes from this Mr. Snelgrove, it is here returned to him, "neat as imported."

"He (Lord Byron) noticed him (*videlicet*, myself) on every occasion, and made him at last so far forget himself, that he considered

he had power and ability to *criticise* the works of *his great benefactor !*"

The awful darings and "benefactions" I leave in the reader's hands: but whatever might have been my "power and ability," another thing was wanting to the criticism; to wit, inclination. I am not accustomed to speak ill of the writings of any body in conversation, and certainly said nothing of them in the instance alluded to.

"He presumed to censure 'Parisina,' and Mr. Dodd, the Deputy Consul (formerly clerk to Captain Rowley) traced to the pen of Leigh Hunt some criticisms that had appeared in the *Livourna* Gazette and *Lucca* newspaper."

I never before heard of Mr. Snelgrove the lieutenant, or Mr. Dodd the former clerk; nor did I ever write any thing about "Parisina," nor any thing in a foreign paper, nor could any criticisms of mine be traced to the "Livourna" or Lucca papers, which Lord Byron himself was not before acquainted with in print. What is remarkable is, that to the best of my recollection I never even read "Parisina," nor is this the only one of his Lord-

ship's works, of which I can say as much, acquainted as I am with the others. I never valued any of his minor poems, with the exception of some of the lyrics, and perhaps "Lara," which I recollect thinking the best of his narratives; and I mention this, because I have also a recollection, that he agreed with me in that opinion; though it may have been expressed before the appearance of "Parisina." Whether he liked "Parisina," as they say he did, I cannot tell; nor is it of any consequence. He would have thought it of little consequence himself, knowing his own versatility that way, and what contradictory opinions he would utter both of himself and others, a hundred times in a week. But to proceed.

"Mr. Hunt," quoth our patron of the "Life and Times," "ought to have been aware, how jealous an author is of the darling offspring of his muse, and he ought to have spared the feelings, or, if he pleases, the weaknesses of his friend and benefactor. But wits, like gamecocks, never spare each other. *From this time, our informant states, that Lord Byron never*

saw or spoke to Mr. Leigh Hunt, or any of his connexions!

"*Ex uno*," as the Captain says, "*disce omnes.*" Perhaps, after all, there are no such persons as Mr. Snelgrove and Mr. Dodd (Blackwood, the pious dog,* makes nothing of inventing a few lieutenants); or they may be very respectable people, and know no more of the story than I did a year and a half ago, when I met with the "Life and Times" by chance. I certainly should not have taken the trouble of contradicting it but for the present work. Our biographer may have cut it out with his scissors from some other fictitious narrative, together with the opinions he seems to give upon it; for he is as wonderful an author in his way as Lord Byron, being a great many other writers besides himself.

Idle as this story is, it may have been made use of, for aught I know, to render Lord Byron uneasy in my society. To be sure, he never hinted to me a syllable of any thing of the sort. He knew, if he did, that he should get at the truth, as far as I was concerned. But it is not impossible, that notwithstanding

what he knew of me, his own habit of speaking against his friends might have rendered him doubtful whether circumstances had not provoked me to do as much for him. At all events, being vicious on that score, he was naturally suspicious; and if I took no advantage of his weaknesses, others were not so scrupulous. People came to him from as many quarters as there are foolish and envious persons, to try and break up our connexion; and they would not stick at a trifle to effect their purpose.

It would be loss of time, on almost every other subject, to go on contradicting the heap of absurdities that our compiler has gathered together. But the minutest details respecting Lord Byron have not yet lost their interest with the public: it is useful to show how many falsehoods have been told them; and in contradicting this one publication I contradict twenty others, the scandalous ones included.

Our author has no sooner done with this story, than, as if drunk with credulity, and resolved to keep it up to the last syllable, he goes on compiling and believing at a most

glorious rate. There is a favourite passage in the Calvinist hymn-books, which tells the ungodly to stand upon no ceremony in becoming proselytes, not to be ashamed of any contradiction the most barefaced, or to think of waiting to change a rag of their rascality.

> "Come wretched, come ragged, come filthy, come bare;
> You can't come too filthy; come just as you are."

Just in the same manner our compiler, scissors in hand, calls the gossips and the anonymous writers about him, proposing not even to cast away their rags when they come, but to turn them to account, and preserve every particle of them for their mutual honour and profit;—

> "Come writers on Byron, come liars, come fools;
> You can't come too lying:—come, lend us your tools."

The account that follows at p. 146, of Lord Byron's residence at Pisa, was probably some direct invention, made for a magazine at the time, and duly served up hot to the public, after which our author has it cold for his collation.

"Lord Byron, *while at Pisa*, resided near the

Leaning Tower, at Signora Dominesia's, a lady who keeps several small houses," &c.

Particular rogue! Lord Byron, while at Pisa, lived in the Casa Lanfranchi, a palace in the High Street of that city, called the Lung'-Arno. I am not sure whether he might not have put up at some lodging-house for a night or so.

"With the Grand Duke, Lord Byron was intimate."

He never exchanged a word with him. He told me he had often been given to understand that his presence would have been welcome at Court, and that the Grand Duchess in particular (a princess of the House of Saxony) wished to see him; but that he had an invincible antipathy to going. I believe his lameness alone gave him a dislike to appearing at any Court, setting aside the consideration that might have rendered it unpleasant in Italy, after the connexions he had made with people not in favour.—Of the story of the banker, which is connected with this intimacy with the Grand Duke, I know nothing; nor of twenty others selected with the same confidence; but

as I observed before, the fictions with which every thing I do know is mixed up and made absurd, hinder one from taking a particle of any thing else for granted.

"Canova chiselled out four busts for him." P. 149.

Canova, to the best of my recollection, never did any thing for him. It was Bartolini who made his bust, and very dissatisfied he was with it. He said it made him look old; and could not bear any body to think it like.

"This second time he fixed his quarters at Pisa with a Mrs. Wilson, whose husband had been clerk in a counting-house at Leghorn. With this old lady he frequently strolled."

He strolled with nobody. Whenever he went out, it was on horseback, or in a carriage. He did not like to be seen walking, on account of his lameness; and besides, it would have put him to bodily pain.

"Lord Byron was every inch an Englishman; a true-born Briton, of so patriotic a spirit," &c.

He cared nothing at all for England. He disliked the climate; he disliked the manners

of the people; he did not think them a bit better than other nations: and had he entertained all these opinions in a spirit of philosophy, he would have been right; for it does not become a man of genius to "give up" even to his country, "what is meant for mankind." He was not without some of this spirit; but undoubtedly his greatest dislike of England was owing to what he had suffered there, and to the ill opinion which he thought was entertained of him. It was this that annoyed him in Southey. I believe if he entertained a mean opinion of the talents of any body, it was of Southey's; and he had the greatest contempt for his political conduct (a feeling which is more common with men of letters than Mr. Southey fancies);* but he believed that the

* I know one of the most eminent writers of the day, not implicated in any violent politics, who looks upon Mr. Southey as at once a half-witted egotist, and something including every offence which he is fond of attributing to others. This opinion is not mine, silly as I hold the Laureat to be in some things, and not half so wise or so good as he takes himself to be in others; but it may serve to show him (if any thing can) that he is not free from as bad a repute with some, as he would cast upon Lord Byron.

formal and the foolish composed the vast body of the middle orders in England; with these he looked upon Mr. Southey as in great estimation: and whatever he did to risk individual good opinion,—however he preferred fame and a "sensation," at all hazards,—he did not like to be thought ill of by any body of people. Individual opinion he could dare, could provoke, could put to the most mortifying trials, could childishly throw away; but after the publication of Beppo and Don Juan, and the new popularity they gave him (which I will venture to say was a great surprise to him, and a no less edifying symptom on the part of the British public), he began to think himself safe again with regard to bodies of society, and was exceedingly enraged to be waked up out of his dream. He fancied that, in turning the laugh against Southey, he should have rendered the public unwilling to hear him; perhaps have ousted him from the Quarterly Review; forgetting, that all which the public care for on these occasions, is what the by-standers care for, when a ring is made for a couple of boxers. He found that Southey

could still write in the "Quarterly," and read him a lecture; and however sure the Laureat was to make the lecture an exposure of his own folly and conceit, there were too many hits in it at his Lordship's weak points not to distress him sorely, and make him mad with vexation at having subjected himself to such an antagonist. However, if he had not the last word, he had the best. All Southey's attacks are commonplaces and fumes of "Malvolio," compared with the Vision of Judgment —the most masterly satire that has appeared since the time of Pope.

Of Lord Byron's defence of "Cain," our author says, that "if it does not wholly exculpate him, it at least proves, that he is less culpable than all the ancient writers of mysteries; than Milton and Goethe;—at all events, that he had no intention of offending morality, or the tender consciences of timid men."

Lord Byron's defence was, that "if 'Cain' was blasphemous, 'Paradise Lost' was blasphemous. 'Cain,'" said he, "was nothing more than a drama, not a piece of argument. If Lucifer and Cain speak as the first rebel

and the first murderer may be supposed to speak, nearly all the rest of the personages talk also according to their character; and the stronger passions have ever been permitted to the drama."

This is not sincere. "Cain" was undoubtedly meant as an attack upon the crude notions of the Jews respecting evil and its origin. Lord Byron might not have thought much about the matter, when he undertook to write it; but such was his feeling. He was conscious of it; and if he had not been, Mr. Shelley would not have suffered him to be otherwise. But the case is clear from internal evidence. Milton, in his "Paradise Lost," *intended* nothing against the religious opinions of his time; Lord Byron did. The reader of the two poems feels certain of this; and he is right. It is true, the argumentative part of the theology of Milton was so bad, that a suspicion has crossed the minds of some in these latter times, whether he was not purposely arguing against himself; but a moment's recollection of his genuine character and history does it away. Milton was as decidedly a Cal-

vinist at the time he wrote "Paradise Lost," and subject to all the gloomy and degrading sophistries of his sect, as he certainly altered his opinions afterwards, and subsided in a more *Christian* Christianity. Lord Byron, with a greater show of reason, and doubtless with a genuine wonder (for he reasoned very little on any thing), asks "what the Methodists would say to Goethe's 'Faust?' His devil," says he, "not only talks very familiarly of heaven, but very familiarly in heaven. What would they think," he continues, "of the colloquies of Mephistophiles and his pupil, or the more daring language of the prologue, which not one of us will venture to translate? And yet this play is not only tolerated and admired, as every thing he wrote must be, but acted in Germany. Are the Germans then a less moral people than we are? I doubt it."

No: they are not: but they have got beyond us in these speculative matters; at least, as a nation. It is the case with other nations, to whom we set the example as individuals. We have something of the practical indecision of first thinkers about us. We start a point

of knowledge and reformation, and then out of the very conscience that has forced us to do it, shrink back from pursuing it through its consequences. Lord Byron may well question those as to their right of tolerating Goethe, who, without knowing him thoroughly, will put up with any thing he writes, because he is a foreigner, a great name, and a minister with orders at his button-hole. But Goethe did not write, as Lord Byron did, without knowing his subject and himself, or without being prepared with a succedaneum for the opinions he was displacing,—one, too, that could reconcile those very opinions to the past condition of society, and even connect them and their very contradictions with the nobler views by which they are displaced. Lord Byron was a helper in a cause nobler than he was aware of, and he was not without the comforts of an instinct to that effect; but his unsubdued and unreflecting passions had not allowed him to be properly conscious of it. By the same defect he subjected himself to questions which he could not answer; and, because he was not prepared with good argu-

ments, resorted to bad and insincere ones, which deceived nobody.

The world have been much puzzled by Lord Byron's declaring himself a Christian, every now and then, in some part of his writings or conversations, and giving them to understand in a hundred others that he was none. The truth is, he did not know what he was; and this is the case with hundreds of the people who wonder at him. I have touched this matter before; but will add a word or two. He was a Christian by education: he was an infidel by reading. He was a Christian by habit; he was no Christian upon reflection. I use the word here in its ordinary acceptation, and not in its really Christian and philosophical sense, as a believer in the endeavour and the universality, which are the consummation of Christianity. His faith was certainly not swallowed up in charity; but his charity, after all, was too much for it. In short, he was not a Christian, in the sense understood by that word; otherwise he would have had no doubts about the matter, nor (as I have before noticed) would he have spoken so irreverently upon

matters in which no Christian of this sort indulges licence of speech. Bigoted Christians of all sects take liberties enough, God knows. They are much profaner than any devout Deist ever thinks of being; but still their profanities are not of a certain kind. They would not talk like Voltaire, or say with Lord Byron, that upon Mr. Wordsworth's showing, "Carnage must be Christ's sister."*

* Mr. Wordsworth says in his "Thanksgiving Ode for the Battle of Waterloo," that "Carnage is God's daughter."

> "But thy most dreaded instrument,
> In working out a pure intent,
> Is man, arrayed for mutual slaughter;
> Yea, Carnage is thy daughter."

How poor and wilful, how presumptuous, and at the same time misgiving,—how full of a pretended right to say the boldest and most shocking things unexplained, in the very vindication of meekness and humility, and to let us think what we please of it, because he has might and orthodoxy on his side,—is this sullen ebullition, this thump of a doubtful fist on a pulpit cushion, compared with the kindly and noble exposition which Goethe would have given us of the possible necessity of past warfare, in one of his transcendant allegories! The more I know of Goethe, and think of the Lake poets, the more I see how much they have owed to him, and how ill they have understood it.

P. 336, vol. ii. "There is no man, nor well educated woman in Italy, that cannot quote all the finer passages of the favourite author (Dante)." (A great mistake.) "The Guiccioli could repeat almost all the Divine Comedy."—Three volumes of stern writing about Hell, Purgatory, and Paradise! *Credat Medwin!* I remember very well, that his Lordship's fair friend was quite horrified at the poem of Andrea di Basso, a writer of a Dantesque order of mind, quoted in the "Indicator." It was addressed to the corpse of a proud beauty. Lord Byron showed it her to enjoy her impatience. She was quite vexed and mortified, and wondered how I could translate so shocking an author. *

* As Andrea de Basso is not easily to be met with, the reader is presented with a specimen of what frightened the lady:

"Risorga dalla tomba avara e lorda
La putrida tua salma, o donna cruda,
Or che di spirto nuda
E cieca e muta e sorda
Ai vermi dai pastura;
E da la prima altura
Da fiera morte scessa
Fai tuo letto una fossa.

Vol. ii. p. 355. "Byron's vanity, or, to give it a milder and perhaps more appropriate term,

Notte, continua notte,
Ti divora ed inghiotte;
E la puzza ti smembra
Le si pastose membra,
E ti stai fitta, fitta per dispetto,
Come animal immondo al laccio stretto.
"Vedrai se ognun di te mettrà paura,
E fuggira come garzon la sera
Da l' ombra lunga e nera
Che striscia per le mura;
Vedrai se a la tua vose
Cedran le alme pietose;
Vedrai se al tuo invitare
Alcun vorrà cascare;
Vedrai se seguiranti
Le turbe de gli amanti,
E se il dì porterai
Per dove passerai,
O pur se spargerai tenebre e lezzo,
Tal che a ti stessa verrai in disprezzo."

Rise from the loathsome and devouring tomb,
Give up thy body, woman without heart,
Now that its worldly part
Is over; and deaf, blind, and dumb,
Thou servest worms for food,
And from thine altitude

his love of fame, was excessive; but it was erroneous, as well as ungenerous, to attribute to him so inordinate a thirst for it, as to wish to monopolize it all to himself. It has been stated that he was exorbitantly desirous of being the sole object of interest, whether in the circle in which he was living, or in the

Fierce death has shaken thee down, and thou dost fit
Thy bed within a pit.
Night, endless night hath got thee,
To clutch and to englut thee;
And rottenness confounds
Thy limbs and their sleek rounds,
And thou art stuck there, stuck there in despite,
Like a foul animal in a trap at night.
Come in the public path and see how all
Shall fly thee, as a child goes shrieking back
From something long and black,
That mocks along the wall.
See if the kind will stay
To hear what thou would'st say;
See if thine arms can win
One soul to think of sin;
See if the tribe of wooers
Will now become pursuers;
And if where they make way,
Thou 'lt carry, now, the day;
Or whether thou wilt spread not such foul night,
That thou thyself shalt feel the shudder and the fright."

wider sphere of the world; he could bear no rival; he could not tolerate the person who attracted attention from himself; he instantly became animated with a bitter interest, and hated, for the time, every greater or more celebrated man than himself. He carried his jealousy up even to Bonaparte; and it was the secret of his contempt of Wellington. It was dangerous for his friends to rise in the world; if they valued not his friendship more than their own fame, he hated them. All this is a gross misrepresentation."

There is a great deal of truth in it.

"Eager as was his appetite for fame, the consciousness of his own excellence set him above the meanness of envy or jealousy; and he was ever ready to give every candidate for popularity his due share of merit."

A mistake, as I have shown before. It is the same with his jealousy. But the above passages have suggested a farther remark or two. I believe he would not have been so jealous, had he not taken it for a strength, instead of a weakness, to give way to every thing in the extreme. He might have allowed

it to be a weakness in one sense; but he thought these kind of excesses indicative of greatness; and out of the concession, the vindication, or whatever else it might be according to circumstances, he extracted, above all, food for his love of astonishing. Southey hit him rightly there. He did not care what he did to astonish the world, but then he was shocked if the world did not think the best of it. He thought they would, because *he* did it; and was much mortified to discover, that every body, whose good word he thought worth having, was not of that opinion. He then, in his spleen, was for thinking himself unjustly diminished in reputation; and so he went on, between excessive confidence and resenting doubt, playing the spoiled child of fame, and alternately lording it over the public, or sulking in a corner. I have no doubt he was jealous at times of every body who interested the world; but as he thought nobody really greater than himself, he became reconciled the next minute, and could like the favourites of the public, and relish their works as much as any body, partly because their acceptance of the

world reminded him of his own greater acceptance. For this reason, he was not so jealous of writers whom he thought popular, as of some, Mr. Wordsworth, for instance, whose claims he could not so well define, and who, he suspected, might turn out some day or other to be the greater men. In his anxiety, also, to identify his admirers with those who conferred existing reputation, he was as anxious to acknowledge the merits of all the writers in fashion, as he was careful of not committing himself with the rest. All his public praises, it is to be observed, were bestowed upon Scott, Moore, Campbell, and others, not excepting Rogers; in short, every body who pleased "the town." In his eulogies of these, he was warm. Shelley he did not dare to acknowledge, even as a visitor. Keats he would never have said a word of, had he not discovered, that the author of "Hyperion," besides being dead, was an admirer of "Don Juan;" and then he was afraid of committing himself too much. He must couple his good word with a sarcasm. His latter connexion with myself arose out of circumstances; out of the

secret influence that Shelley had over him, his immediate quarrel with his publishers and advisers, and his hope of getting money, and striking a new blow that should astonish both friends and enemies. But this I have explained before. Connected with me or not, he would never have said a word to my advantage, unless we had carried all before us, and the côteries themselves had been conquered. He was so cautious of turning the public attention upon any body whom he considered as not in fashion, and at the same time so jealous of being thought indebted to any such person for a hint, that he was disconcerted at the mention I made, in "The Liberal," of the *Specimen of an intended National Poem*, since called, *The Monks and the Giants*, the precursor of "Beppo" and "Don Juan." In vain had "Don Juan" avoided the mistake which hindered the Specimen from succeeding; in vain it was, in every sense of the word, a greater work: and in vain, great as it was, were the readers of Italian aware, that twenty poems existed in that language, which hindered it from being an original in point of

style. He did not like that any thing should be mentioned, which deprived him of a particle of fame, well or ill grounded. A reference to the Specimen did not please him: I doubt whether he was not sorry that a specimen of Ricciardetto was given at the same time; and (with the exception of Coleridge, who had visited and complimented him, and whom he thought too unpopular to be made otherwise) the only instance in which I ever knew him to volunteer the mention of an author, not in repute, or to recommend it to another, was a request he made me to speak well, on the same occasion, of Lord Glenbervie's translation of the First Canto of that poem!—an honour to "The Liberal," to the "National Poem," and to myself, which I was obliged to decline. Lord Glenbervie, who, I believe, was a very good old gentleman, had done two good things in the eyes of his recommender; he had quoted a couplet of "Don Juan," and written a harmless version.—Such were the little things which Lord Byron, in his false estimate of human nature, thought it great to do.

At p. 20, vol. iii. is a pleasant letter from an American,—one of the best that has been written about Lord Byron, and describing him in one of his pleasantest moments. I have explained why he was partial to the Americans, and felt at his ease in their company.

. . . . "I intend to visit America as soon as I can arrange my affairs in Italy. Your morals are much purer than those of England *(there, says the American, I laughed)*; those of the higher classes of England are become very corrupt *(I smothered my laugh)*. Do you think, if I were to live in America, they would ever make me a Judge of the Ten Pound Court?"

Upon this passage our compiler says, "Whether or not Brother Jonathan intended to quizz Lord Byron, it seems pretty evident that his Lordship was quizzing Brother Jonathan. His expressing a doubt whether the Americans would make him a Judge of the Ten Pound Court, conveyed his Lordship's opinion, that literary merit met with but very poor encouragement in the United States; and when he talked of their morals being much purer than those of England, Brother Jonathan

laughed, and well he might; for, take the United States, from northward to southward (we speak of the coast, not of the inland parts), there is not more licentiousness to be found in any part of England, not excepting those sinks of vice, the seaport towns of Plymouth, Portsmouth, or the Wapping district of London. A residence of some years, in all those eastern parts of the United States, authorizes us to speak pretty decidedly on that point."

"Now Brother Jonathan" did not laugh because the Americans were more or less moral than the English, but because Lord Byron talked about morals at all. He thought it was like a bon-vivant shaking his head at the gourmands. His Lordship, however, affected nothing on that point. He might have appeared to over-do the gravity of his ethics, and to intend something mock-heroical; but he was as little in the habit of defending his own morals, as he did those of high life in general. He philosophized very ill upon both. On the latter he was accustomed to express himself very broadly. I have heard him say many times, that, for all their face-making, the morals of

the English aristocracy were not a whit better than those of France or any other nation. At the same time, it must be recollected, that he had not been in the habit of associating with the staider part of it. Nevertheless, I believe it will not be denied by any body acquainted with the world, that the upper classes are still less restrained in their conduct on certain points, than their countrymen suppose them to be. The truth is, that leisure, luxury, and the cultivation of the graces, naturally tend to a relaxation of the received notions of morality; and hypocrisy being more immediately convenient than plain-dealing, and therefore in the long run pronounced necessary (which is an opinion prevalent in more classes than one), it is not considered how far the notions themselves might be improved and rendered harmless (as in the case, for instance, of a greater facility of divorce), but education teaching one thing and custom another, the conscience and the heart become injured; and intrigue in high life has ultimately the same ill effect in producing false and melancholy impressions of human

nature, as tricks of trade do among the middle classes. "But how is the world to be altered?" cry both classes:—"It is the same as it has ever been, and as it ever will be." Is it so? *That,* I suspect, is more than you or I can tell. Oh profound, ancient, sure, and unalterable world, that have a history at least four thousand years old, (a mighty sum in eternity!) and are all as naked as savages, and have not altered a jot of your customs since polygamy was in fashion, and children were offered to Moloch!—It is as idle to talk of the unalterableness of any thing human, as it is of the necessity of falsehood. What have become of our own previous customs,—hundreds of them? Of the conjugal strictness of the Italians? Of the rack and the inquisition? Of Popery in England, king-worship in France, and hopelessness in South America? There is a sect among us (the Moravians), whose tradesmen will not tell a lie upon any consideration, even about a stocking or a Dutch doll. These people do not get a jot the less money than other tradesmen. It is possible, though not very likely, considering

the rarity of the thing, that they may be slower in getting it; but they are sure, for so is the purchaser; and they do not spoil, by the way, the enjoyments they look to, because they retain that lively sense of their own worth, which continues them in a good opinion of others and of existence.

But I digress. — "Lord Byron," says the author of the "Thousand and One Byronian bites," vol. iii. p. 36, "was wandering, during the autumn of the year 1822, on the eastern shores of Italy, without any settled determination where to take up his winter-quarters, when chance brought him into the town of Vado, and the Blossom, British sloop-of-war, into the bay, where she anchored. The captain landed, and as he entered the hotel, met with Lord Byron, and recognized him through the disguise of a mountain farmer, with a fowling-piece under his arm. They were old friends, and the meeting on both sides was cordial and sincere. Captain Stewart spent several days on the mountains with his friend, who lodged at a farm-house, perfectly *incog.* and attended only by one Italian servant.

"The Blossom, it was intended, should remain for some months at Genoa to protect the British maritime rights, and proceed to Smyrna in the Spring with a convoy. Lord Byron agreed to accompany and pass the winter in the same place in the society of his newly-found friend; they arrived at Genoa without accident, and his Lordship fixed himself in one wing of an ancient palace, situated in that part of the city called the 'Mount of Albaro,' distant from the noise of the port and disagreeable effluvia of the markets."

Not a word of truth in this. He was living quietly at Albaro, as little wandering, or able to wander, as need be; but studying, it is true, how he might contrive to wander. Our compiler is in one of his highest states of the believing in this part of his work. He proceeds to extract from a magazine one of the few letters about Lord Byron that are worth any thing; and then undertakes to convict it of a series of mistakes, by a series of the most extraordinary mistakes of his own. The letter (to complete the curiosity of it) appeared in "Blackwood's Magazine,"—a strange place in

which to recognize my old schoolfellow who wrote it;—but he is a good fellow, and has a right to his universalities. What is more curious, and shows the absorbing effect which Lord Byron's position in society had upon all classes, is, that one of the few remarks which his visitor has recorded, and which he looks upon as an evidence of his Lordship's aristocracy, was made by myself. It is the one upon Cobbett.

"From the cause of the Spaniards," says the writer, (whom, by the way, I had introduced to Lord B.,) "the conversation directed itself to the cause of the Greeks, and the state paper of the Holy Alliance upon this subject also was brought upon the carpet. Cobbett's name was introduced, and the aristocratic poet's observation was too striking to be forgotten. 'I should not like to see Cobbett presiding at a revolutionary green-table, and to be examined by him; for, if he were to put ten questions to me, and I should answer nine questions satisfactorily, but were to fail in the tenth—for that he would send me to the *lantern*."

The following passage is added here, both because it touches upon a point which has excited attention, and because it refers to a body of men who have given rise to less of the *odium theologicum* than any other priesthood on record.

"Lord Byron then turned to me, and asked, 'are you not afraid of calling upon such an excommunicated heretic as myself? If you are an ambitious man, you will never get on in the Church after this.' I replied that he was totally mistaken, if he fancied there was any such jealous or illiberal spirit at home; and he instantly interrupted me, by saying, 'Yes, yes, you are right—there is a great deal of liberal sentiment among Churchmen in England, and that is why I prefer the Established Church of England to any other in the world. I have been intimate, in my time, with several clergymen, and never considered our difference of opinion was any bar to our intimacy. They say I am no Christian, but I am a Christian.' I afterwards asked Mr. —— what his Lordship meant by an assertion so much in contradiction

with his writings, and I was told that he often threw out random declarations of this kind, without any meaning."

The Mr. —— here omitted in the magazine, is myself. How much ought I not to have been elevated and surprised, when I found, by the pages of my friend of the "Life and Times," that besides being myself, I was also "Colonel Burr, formerly Vice-President of the United States," and that I had "unfortunately killed General Hamilton in a duel many years ago!" What an elegant load on my conscience is here! My friend also, who was with me, besides being the Rev. Mr. G——, as legitimate a son in every sense of the word as can be found, was, it seems, the Reverend Mr. J. or "Johnson; a natural son of Lord Hampden!" There is no knowing how many people one is to be, before one dies. I have been, in my time, almost all the Hunts that have been talked of; besides being, at the same instant, a tall man and a short, a man with black hair and a man with white, a fop and a sloven, a gentleman and no gentleman, a sayer of things

I never said, and a doer of deeds never done; and now, in 1822, it appears I was a civil person and a colonel, and that I went to see Lord Byron with a legitimate natural son of the Rev. Mr. G. and my Lord Hampden!

The letter written by this twofold clergyman (who should have taken the opportunity of enriching our language with the dual number) is, our compiler informs us, "in many points very correct," but "requires explanation where he alludes to subjects of which he is ignorant only from hearsay." Accordingly, he tells us, that the palace in which Lord Byron lived on the hill of Albaro, was once the abode of the celebrated Andrew Doria, Doge of Genoa: Lord Byron, as he observes, a few pages farther, having "a strong partiality for fixing his abode in ancient chateaus of romantic celebrity."

That is to say, Doria's residence in the palace is made for the occasion. If Lord Byron lived in a palace at Genoa, it must, or ought, or he wished it to have been, Doria's: therefore it *was* Doria's; which it unfortunately was

not. It was the Saluzzi palace, as I have mentioned before; and was celebrated for nothing but for his Lordship's living in it.

At p. 51 of the same volume, is a romantic account of a little groom and his Lordship, riding about Genoa in fantastic dresses. It is worth quoting, inasmuch as it shows the vulgar melodramatic idea entertained of Lord Byron. "This youth," we are told, "was dressed in a livery, not unlike the Robin Hood archers: a green coat, and hat flopped down on the right shoulder, the rim on the left being fastened up to the crown by a buckle and black feather. When they rode out into the country he had a pouch and powder-horn by his side, and a carbine slung at his back. His Lordship wore his usual travelling dress, which we have had occasion before to notice, of brown waistcoat and trowsers, with large silver buttons, buff-coloured boots, white hat, morocco belt and daggers, and a loose flowing green robe, studded by a small silver star in front. The pair were unique at Genoa, and created some surprise, which made Lord Byron, when he sallied forth, proceed at full gallop through the city; and to

avoid, on the high-road, a religious cavalcade, of which there were many every day, he would clap spurs to his horse, and leaping the first fence near, ride over the fields and through the vineyards, till he had cut them, and then he returned to the high-road again. He had several times to pay for these trespasses, and always submitted to it with good-humour."

Brown and silver, buff-coloured boots, a green cloak, and a star! And this was his "usual travelling dress;" and then, in order to avoid being stared at, which could have been his only object in wearing it, he would leap his horse over the fences, and ride over the fields and vineyards! If he had, he would have got knocked on the head. It is unnecessary to tell anybody, except Mr. Southey and the little boys who go to the Circus, that Lord Byron performed no such feats, and wore no such dress. Farthermore, he had no servants at Genoa but his old ones, and there are no fences there—there are only walls.

The falsehoods now thicken so, that to contradict them would be to contradict almost every page in the book. This is the case, at

least, to my knowledge, in every thing in which Italy is concerned; and the conclusion, respecting what is said of Greece, is a natural consequence. The fêtes at Genoa, the walking arm-in-arm with mysterious old gentlemen, the walking at all, the charities to public hospitals, the frequentations of ships of war, with a thousand *etceteras*, all are false. To refute them, for refutation sake, would be a ludicrous waste of time. My object is to take notice of such passages only, as suggest something either of contradiction or recollection, capable of adding to Lord Byron's real history: I shall, therefore, take leave of the Tempora and Mores of our friend of the "Life and Times," by extracting, first, a summary of the noble Bard's character in his highest, most satisfied, and most convincing style; and secondly, a character of the biography itself, worthy of all the rest, and self-evident to a degree of the dazzling. It is only a pity, that, in addition to the list of Lord Byron's accomplishments, he did not mention, that besides being "a scholar," and "a rock," and "a reed shaken by the wind," he was a rat-catcher and

the Pope's grandson; and that, in recording the truth of his biography, he did not subjoin the certificate from the Lord Mayor usual on such occasions.

"The life of a scholar," says our author, quoting Dr. Johnson, "abounds not with adventure;" in this he spoke from his own experience, and, during his day, men of learning were not to be found; or, indeed, looked for, amongst the great and titled. The life of Lord Byron comprises a little of every thing; he was at once a *nobleman*, (a sufficient passport to fame, without even ability or genius to recommend any one to notice)—he was an *accomplished gentleman*, quite enough to make all he said acceptable in genteel society—he was an *admirer* of the fair sex, a virtue (I must call it so) that, at all events, ensured him the smiles of those for whom poets, painters, and heroes live, labour, and die;—he was a *profound scholar;* that ensured him the estimation of all men of genius,—he was a man of *dramatic ability;* this ensured him celebrity amongst buskined enthusiasts—he was a *moral man;* that ought to have commanded the praise of

religious minds—he was a bard, unequalled since the days of Shakspeare, and this made every British heart-pulse throb with pride at his name—he was a lover of *constitutional liberty;* as such he was reverenced by men of liberal principles—he was a *traveller,* a wanderer, an exile, a man of blighted hopes and blasted fortunes: at times, a reed shaken by the wind, or a rock of adamant, according as noble pride or tender passion moved him—his variety of character, the rapid successions of lights and shades that obscured and illumined all his actions, fixed the attention of mankind; and whilst the blaze of his genius seemed to raise him in our estimation to Heaven, his errors reduced him to a level with earthly beings; and we feel a consolatory exultation in thinking that he was one of us, though so preeminent in talents, that we may say,

> 'He was a man, take him for all in all,
> We ne'er shall look upon his like again.'

" These observations are here introduced, merely because they occur at the moment, from a contemplation of particular circum-

stances in which Lord Byron was engaged. As an excuse for want of connexion in events, we have two precedents; one legal and strong, the other light and amusing, viz. Montesquieu and Boswell: the former made his *Spirit of the Laws* agreeable, from being pursued in no settled form; and Boswell's *Life of Johnson* is admired, because it is 'a thing of shreds and patches,' where something must suit every one's taste; but, in point of fact, Byron's life was

> 'Ever charming, ever new;
> When will the landscape tire the view!'

And be it remembered by the reader, that the biographer has nought in view but plain truth."

In reading such things as these, and thinking that they sell, one almost ceases to look upon the pathetic epithet bestowed on the public in the Rejected Addresses, as a touch of humour. The existing British community, after all, are really and truly a "pensive public," mightily given to a maudlin credulity and the most villanous compounds. See how me-

lancholy it walks out on Sundays! What a solemn roar there is in its laughter in the theatre,—grave and unsocial all the rest of the time, and letting the women stand! See with what avidity it entertains a prize-fight, a mad bull, or a scandalous magazine, which it affects to despise all the while! Any thing to give it a sensation, and make it think well of itself, and of humoursome people like it, at the expense of its neighbours. Aristophanes would have made fine work of it, had it been as good-humoured as the Athenian public; but your *gens tristes* are apt to be savage. Every other public, Athenian or French, is to be laughed at but themselves. Bring home the joke against the English to their own doors, high or low; and, instead of laughing, they send for the constable or the Attorney-General. These matters, however, are mending; and if Mr. Canning's politics can be kept up, the popular blood has a chance of being sweetened. John Bull, to say the truth, has not been a very pleasant fellow, ever since he *was* John Bull, and took to being a bad, bolt-headed sort of Dutchman, which was about the

time the name was first given him. It is high time that he should know the better sort of persons of all countries for what they are, Dutch, French, or Italian; and be as lively and liberal, as he tended to be of old, and as he has quite enough knowledge to make him. Mr. Southey, in a fit of ungrateful spleen, (for John has listened to his epics,) degraded him from his title of Bull, into one which he would have accused me of indecency for mentioning; though of the two I surely have the greater right, and that which is indecent in the cold and gross Laureat, would be another thing out of my West-Indian mouth. But our friend, the public, if he knew his own powers, and would do himself justice, deserves neither the one title nor the other. The more he listens to such washy antiques as Mr. Southey, the more they will cheat him one minute, and insult him the next. They want him to know as little, to say as little, and to share as little, as possible: they, in the mean while, reading him to sleep, picking his pockets, and laughing at his person. On the contrary, let him learn all he can, compare all the

notes, and ask all the questions possible, taking nothing for granted, and he will ultimately enjoy all he ought, which is more than the heroes of Mr. Southey's Book of the Church desire him to do, (though they have been all mightily bent on it themselves,) and a good deal more. Lord Byron has been too much admired by the public, because he was sulky and wilful, and reflected in his person their own love of dictation and excitement. They owe his memory a greater regard, and would do it much greater honour, if they admired him for telling them they were not so perfect a nation as they supposed themselves, and that they might take as well as give lessons of humanity, by a candid comparison of notes with civilization at large.

LETTERS OF LORD BYRON

TO

MR. LEIGH HUNT.

[After what I have related of the intercourse between Lord Byron and myself, it will not be supposed that these letters are published with any other view than that of the entertainment to be derived from the correspondence of a man of wit and celebrity. Had I wished to flatter my vanity, or make a case out for myself in any way, I might have published them long ago. I confess I am not unwilling to let some readers see how ill-founded were certain conjectures of theirs at that time. In other respects, I fear, the letters are not calculated to do me good; for

they exhibit his Lordship in a pleasanter light than truth has obliged me to paint him, and I may seem to be ungrateful for many kind expressions. Let the result be what it ought to be, whether for me or against. I have other letters in my possession, written while Lord Byron was in Italy, and varying in degrees of cordiality, according to the mood he happened to be in. They are for the most part on matters of dispute between us; and are all written in an uneasy, factitious spirit, as different from the straightforward and sincere-looking style of the present, as his aspect in old times varied with his later one.]

LETTER I.

4, Bennet-Street, Dec. 2d, 1813.

MY DEAR SIR,

Few things could be more welcome than your note; and on Saturday morning I will avail myself of your permission to thank you for it in person. My time has not been passed, since we met, either profitably or agreeably. A very short period after my last visit, an incident occurred, with which, I fear, you are

not unacquainted, as report in many mouths and more than one paper was busy with the topic. That naturally gave me much uneasiness. Then, I nearly incurred a lawsuit on the sale of an estate; but that is now arranged: next—but why should I go on with a series of selfish and silly details? I merely wish to assure you that it was not the frivolous forgetfulness of a mind occupied by what is called pleasure (*not* in the true sense of Epicurus) that kept me away; but a perception of my *then* unfitness to share the society of those whom I value and wish not to displease. I hate being *larmoyant*, and making a serious face among those who are cheerful.

It is my wish that our acquaintance, or, if you please to accept it, friendship, may be permanent. I have been lucky enough to preserve some friends from a very early period, and I hope, as I do not (at least now) select them lightly, I shall not lose them capriciously. I have a thorough esteem for that independence of spirit which you have maintained with sterling talent, and at the expense of some suffering. You have not, I trust, aban-

doned the poem you were composing when Moore and I partook of your hospitality in ye summer? I hope a time will come when he and I may be able to repay you in kind for the *latter*;—for the rhyme, at least in *quantity*, you are in arrear to both.

Believe me very truly
and affectionately yours,
BYRON.

LETTER II.

Dec. 22, 1813.

MY DEAR SIR,

I am indeed "in your debt,"—and, what is still worse, am obliged to follow *royal* example, (he has just apprized *his* creditors that they must wait till ye meeting,) and intreat your indulgence for, I hope, a very short time. The nearest relation and almost ye only friend I possess, has been in London for a week, and leaves it to-morrow with me for her own residence.—I return immediately; but we meet so seldom, and are so *minuted* when we meet at all, that I give up all engagements till *now*,

without reluctance. On my return, I must see you to console myself for my past disappointments. I should feel highly honoured in Mr. B——'s permission to make his acquaintance, and *there* you are in *my* debt—for it is a promise of last summer which I still hope to see performed. Yesterday I had a letter from Moore:—you have probably heard from him lately; but if not, you will be glad to learn that he is the same in heart, head, and health.

LETTER III.

Feb. 9, 1814.

MY DEAR SIR,

I have been snow-bound and thaw-swamped (two compound epithets for you) in the "valley of the shadow" of Newstead Abbey for nearly a month, and have not been four hours returned to London. Nearly the first use I make of my benumbed fingers, is to thank you for your very handsome note in the volume you have just put forth; only, I trust, to be followed by others on subjects more worthy your notice

than the works of contemporaries. Of myself, you speak only too highly—and you must think me strangely spoiled, or perversely peevish, even to suspect that any remarks of yours, in the spirit of candid criticism, could possibly prove unpalatable. Had they been harsh, instead of being written as they are in the indelible ink of good sense and friendly admiration—had they been the harshest—as I knew and know that you are above any personal bias, at least *against* your fellow bards—believe me, they would not have caused a word of remonstrance nor a moment of rankling on my part. Your poem* I *redde*† long ago in the "Reflector," and it is not much to say it is the best "*session*" we have—and with a more difficult subject—for we are neither so good nor so bad (taking the best and worst) as the wits of the olden time.

To your smaller pieces, I have not yet had time to do justice by perusal—and I have a quantity of unanswered, and, I hope, unanswerable letters to wade through before I sleep;

* "The Feast of the Poets."

† *Sic* in MS.

but to-morrow will see me through your volume. I am glad to see you have tracked Gray among the Italians. You will perhaps find a friend or two of yours there also, though not to the same extent; but I have always thought the Italians the *only* poetical moderns:—our Milton and Spenser, and Shakspeare, (the last through translations of their tales) are very Tuscan, and surely it is far superior to the French school. You are hardly fair enough to Rogers—why "*tea?*" You might surely have given him supper—if only a sandwich. Murray has, I hope, sent you my last bantling, "The Corsair." I have been regaled at every inn on the road by lampoons and other merry conceits on myself in the ministerial gazettes, occasioned by the republication of two stanzas inserted in 1812, in Perry's paper.* The hysterics of the Morning Post are quite interesting; and I hear (but have not seen) of something terrific in a last week's Courier—all which I take with "the calm indifference" of Sir Fretful Plagiary. The Morning Post has

* Morning Chronicle.

one copy of devices upon my deformity, which certainly will admit of no "historic doubts," like "Dickon my master's"—another upon my Atheism, which is not quite so clear—and another, very downrightly, says I am the *devil*, (*boiteux* they might have added,) and a rebel and what not:—possibly my accuser of diabolism may be Rosa Matilda; and if so, it would not be difficult to convince her I am a mere man. I shall break in upon you in a day or two—distance has hitherto detained me; and I hope to find you well and myself welcome.

Ever your obliged and sincere,

BYRON.

P. S. Since this letter was written, I have been at your text, which has much *good* humour in every sense of the word. Your notes are of a very high order indeed, particularly on Wordsworth.

LETTER IV.

October 15th, 1814.

MY DEAR HUNT,

I send you some game, of which I beg your acceptance. I specify the quantity as a security against the porter; a hare, a pheasant, and two brace of partridges, which, I hope, are fresh. My stay in town has not been long, and I am in all the agonies of quitting it again next week on business, preparatory to "a change of condition," as it is called by the talkers on such matters. I am about to be married: and am, of course, in all the misery of a man in pursuit of happiness. My intended is two hundred miles off; and the efforts I am making with lawyers, &c. &c. to join my future connexions, are, for a personage of my single and inveterate habits,—to say nothing of indolence,—quite prodigious! I sincerely hope you are better than your paper intimated lately; and that your approaching freedom will find you in full health to enjoy it.

Yours, ever,

BYRON.

LETTER V.

13, Piccadilly Terrace,
May—June 1st, 1815.

MY DEAR HUNT,

I am as glad to hear from as I shall be to see you. We came to town, what is called late in the season; and since that time, the death of Lady Byron's uncle (in the first place), and her own delicate state of health, have prevented either of us from going out much; however, she is now better, and in a fair way of going creditably through the whole process of beginning a family.

I have the alternate weeks of a private box at Drury Lane Theatre: this is my week, and I send you an admission to it for Kean's nights, Friday and Saturday next, in case you should like to see him quietly:—it is close to the stage—the entrance by the private box-door—and you can go without the bore of crowding, jostling, or dressing. I also inclose you a parcel of recent letters from Paris; perhaps you may find some extracts that may amuse yourself or your readers. I have only to beg you will prevent your copyist, or printer, from

mixing up any of the *English* names, or *private* matter contained therein, which might lead to a discovery of the writer; and, as the Examiner is sure to travel back to Paris, might get him into a scrape, to say nothing of his correspondent at home. At any rate, I hope and think the perusal will amuse you. Whenever you come this way, I shall be happy to make you acquainted with Lady Byron, whom you will find any thing but a fine lady—a species of animal which you probably do not affect more than myself. Thanks for ye Mask;—there is not only poetry and thought in the body, but much research and good old reading in your prefatory matter. I hope you have not given up your narrative poem, of which I heard you speak as in progress. It rejoices me to hear of the well-doing and regeneration of the "Feast," setting aside my own selfish reasons for wishing it success. I fear you stand almost single in your liking of "Lara:" it is natural that *I* should, as being my last and most unpopular effervescence:—passing by its other sins, it is too little narrative, and too metaphysical to please the greater number of

readers. I have, however, much consolation in the exception with which you furnish me. From Moore I have not heard very lately. I fear he is a little humorous, because I am a lazy correspondent; but that shall be mended.

Ever your obliged,

And very sincere friend,

BYRON.

P. S. "Politics!" The barking of the war-dogs for their carrion has sickened me of them for the present.

LETTER VI.

13, Terrace, Piccadilly, Oct. 7th, 1815.

MY DEAR HUNT,

I had written a long answer to your last, which I put into the fire; partly, because it was a repetition of what I have already said—and next, because I considered what my opinions are worth, before I made you pay double postage, as your proximity lays you within the jaws of the tremendous "Twopenny," and beyond the verge of franking—the only par-

liamentary privilege (saving one other) of much avail in these "costermonger days."

Pray don't make me an exception to the "Long live King Richard" of your bards in "the Feast." I do allow him to be "prince of the bards of his time," upon the judgment of those who must judge more impartially than I probably do. I acknowledge him as I acknowledge the Houses of Hanover and Bourbon—the—not the "one-ey'd monarch of the blind," but the blind monarch of the one-eyed. I merely take the liberty of a free subject to vituperate certain of his edicts—and that only in private.

I shall be very glad to see you, or your remaining canto; if both together, so much the better.

I am interrupted——

LETTER VII.

Oct. 15th, 1815.

DEAR HUNT,

I send you a thing whose greatest value is its present rarity;* the present copy contains

* A copy of "English Bards and Scotch Reviewers.

some manuscript corrections previous to an Edition which was printed, but not published; and, in short, all that is in the suppressed Edition, the fifth, except twenty lines in addition, for which there was not room in the copy before me. There are in it *many* opinions I have altered, and some which I retain; upon the whole, I wish that it had never been written, though my sending you this copy (the only one in my possession, unless one of Lady B.'s be excepted) may seem at variance with this statement:—but my reason for this is very different: it is, however, the only gift I have made of the kind this many a day.*

P. S. You probably know that it is not in print for sale, nor ever will be (if I can help it) again.

* The absence of the signature to this letter, as to others, is owing to my having given it away. Letters have been given away also, or I should have had more for the reader's amusement.

LETTER VIII.

Oct. 22, 1815.

MY DEAR HUNT,

You have excelled yourself—if not all your cotemporaries, in the Canto* which I have just finished. I think it above the former books; but that is as it should be; it rises with the subject, the conception appears to me perfect, and the execution perhaps as nearly so as verse will admit. There is more originality than I recollect to have seen elsewhere within the same compass, and frequent and great happiness of expression. In short, I must turn to the faults, or what appear such to me: these are not many, nor such as may not be easily altered, being almost all *verbal*;—and of the same kind as I pretended to point out in the former cantos, viz. occasional quaintness and obscurity, and a kind of a harsh and yet colloquial compounding of epithets, as if to avoid saying common things in the common way; "difficile est proprié communia dicere," seems

* One of the Cantos of the story of "Rimini;" I believe, the third.

at times to have met with in you a literal translator. I have made a few, and but a few, pencil marks on the MS. which you can follow or not, as you please.

The poem, as a whole, will give you a very high station; but where is the conclusion? Don't let it cool in the composition! You can always delay as long as you like revising, though I am not sure, in the very face of Horace, that the "nonum," &c. is attended with advantage, unless we read "months" for "years." I am glad the book sent* reached you. I forgot to tell you the story of its suppression, which shan't be longer than I can make it. My motive for writing that poem was, I fear, not so fair as you are willing to believe it; I was angry, and determined to be witty, and, fighting in a crowd, dealt about my blows against all alike, without distinction or discernment. When I came home from the East, among other new acquaintances and friends, politics and the state of the Nottingham rioters,—(of which county I am a land-

* "English Bards," &c.

holder, and Lord Holland Recorder of the town,) led me by the good offices of Mr. Rogers into the society of Lord Holland, who with Lady Holland was particularly kind to me: about March, 1812, this introduction took place, when I made my first speech on the Frame Bill, in the same debate in which Lord Holland spoke. Soon after this, I was correcting the fifth edition of "E. B." for the press, when Rogers represented to me that he knew Lord and Lady Holland would not be sorry if I suppressed any farther publication of that poem; and I immediately acquiesced, and with great pleasure, for I had attacked them upon a fancied and false provocation, with many others; and neither was, nor am sorry, to have done what I could to stifle that ferocious rhapsody. This was subsequent to my acquaintance with Lord Holland, and was neither expressed nor understood, as a *condition* of that acquaintance. Rogers told me, he thought I ought to suppress it; I thought so too, and did it as far as I could, and that's all. I sent you my copy, because I consider your having it much the same as having it myself. Lady

Byron has one; I desire not to have any other; and sent it only as a curiosity and a memento.

LETTER IX.

13, Terrace, Piccadilly, Sept.—Oct.* 30th, 1815.

MY DEAR HUNT,

Many thanks for your books, of which you already know my opinion. Their external splendour should not disturb you as inappropriate—they have still more within than without.

I take leave to differ from you on Wordsworth, as freely as I once agreed with you; at that time I gave him credit for a promise, which is unfulfilled. I still think his capacity warrants all you say of *it* only—but that his performances since "Lyrical Ballads," are miserably inadequate to the ability which lurks within him: there is undoubtedly much natural talent spilt over "The Excursion;" but it is rain upon rocks—where it stands and stagnates, or rain upon sands—where it falls with-

* *Sic* in MS.

out fertilizing. Who can understand him? Let those who do, make him intelligible. Jacob Behmen, Swedenborg, and Joanna Southcote, are mere types of this arch-apostle of mystery and mysticism; but I have done—no, I have not done, for I have too petty, and perhaps unworthy objections in small matters to make to him, which, with his pretensions to accurate observation, and fury against Pope's false translation of the "Moonlight scene in Homer," I wonder he should have fallen into:—these be they:—He says of Greece in the body of his book—that it is a land of

> "*Rivers, fertile* plains, and *sounding* shores,
> Under a cope of *variegated* sky."

The rivers are dry half the year, the plains are barren, and the shores *still* and *tideless* as the Mediterranean can make them; the sky is any think but variegated, being for months and months but "darkly, deeply, beautifully blue."—The next is in his notes, where he talks of our "Monuments crowded together in the busy, &c. of a large town," as compared with the "still seclusion of a Turkish cemetery

in some *remote* place." This is pure stuff: for *one* monument in our church-yards there are *ten* in the Turkish, and so crowded, that you cannot walk between them; they are always close to the walls of the towns, that is, merely divided by a path or road; and as to "remote places," men never take the trouble, in a barbarous country, to carry their dead very far; they must have lived near to where they are buried. There are no cemeteries in "*remote* places," except such as have the cypress and the tombstone still left, where the olive and the habitation of the living have perished..... These things I was struck with, as coming peculiarly in my own way; and in both of these he is wrong; yet I should have noticed neither but for his attack on Pope for a like blunder, and a peevish affectation about him, of despising a popularity which he will never obtain. I write in great haste, and, I doubt, *not* much to the purpose; but you have it hot and hot, just as it comes, and so let it go.

By the way, both he and you go too far against Pope's "So when the moon," &c.: it is no translation, I know; but it is not such

false description as asserted. I have read it on the spot: there is a burst, and a lightness, and a glow about the night in the Troad, which makes the "planets vivid," and the "pole glaring:" the moon is—at least the sky is clearness itself; and I know no more appropriate expression for the expansion of such a heaven—o'er the scene—the plain—the sea—the sky—Ida—the Hellespont—Simois—Scamander—and the Isles,—than that of a "flood of glory." I am getting horribly lengthy, and must stop: to the whole of your letter I say "ditto to Mr. Burke," as the Bristol candidate cried by way of electioneering harangue. You need not speak of morbid feelings and vexations to me; I have plenty; for I must blame partly the times, and chiefly myself: but let us forget them. *I* shall be very apt to do so when I see you next. Will you come to the Theatre and see our new management? You shall cut it up to your heart's content, root and branch, afterwards, if you like; but come and see it! If not, I must come and see you.

Ever yours,

Very truly and affectionately,

BYRON.

P.S. Not a word from Moore for these two months. Pray let me have the rest of Rimini. You have two excellent points in that poem—originality and Italianism. I will back you as a bard against half the fellows on whom you have thrown away much good criticism and eulogy: but don't let your bookseller publish in *quarto*; it is the worst size possible for circulation. I say this on bibliopolical authority.

Again, yours ever,

B.

LETTER X.

January 29th, 1816.

DEAR HUNT,

I return your extract with thanks for the perusal, and hope you are by this time on the verge of publication. My pencil-marks on the margin of your former MSS. I never thought worth the trouble of decyphering, but I had no such meaning as you imagine for their being withheld from Murray, from whom I differ entirely as to the *terms* of your agreement; nor do I think you asked a piastre too much for the poem. However, I doubt not he will

deal fairly by you on the whole: he is really a very good fellow, and his faults are merely the leaven of his "trade"—"the trade!" the slave-trade of many an unlucky writer.

The said Murray and I are just at present in no good humour with each other; but he is not the worse for that: I feel sure that he will give your work as fair or a fairer chance in every way than your late publishers; and what he can't do for it, it will do for itself.

Continual laziness and occasional indisposition have been the causes of my negligence (for I deny neglect) in not writing to you immediately. These are excuses: I wish they may be more satisfactory to you than they are to me. I opened my eyes yesterday morning on your compliment of Sunday. If you knew what a hopeless and lethargic den of dulness and drawling our hospital is during a debate, and what a mass of corruption in its patients, you would wonder, not that I very seldom speak, but that I ever attempted it, feeling, as I trust I do, independently. However, when a proper spirit is manifested "without doors," I will endeavour not to be idle within. Do

you think such a time is coming? Methinks there are gleams of it. My forefathers were of the other side of the question in Charles's days, and the fruit of it was a title and the loss of an enormous property.

If the old struggle comes on, I may lose the one and shall never regain the other, but no matter; there are things, even in this world, better than either.

Very truly,

Ever yours,

B.

LETTER XI.

Feb. 26th, 1816.

DEAR HUNT,

Your letter would have been answered before, had I not thought it probable that, as you were in town for a day or so, I should have seen you. I don't mean this as a hint at reproach for not calling, but merely that of course I should have been very glad if you had called in your way home or abroad, as I always would have been, and always shall be. With regard to the circumstance to which

you allude, there is no reason why you should not speak openly to me on a subject already sufficiently rife in the mouths and minds of what is called "the World."—Of the "fifty reports," it follows that forty-nine must have more or less error and exaggeration; but I am sorry to say, that on the main and essential point of an intended, and, it may be, an inevitable separation, I can contradict none. At present I shall say no more—but this is not from want of confidence; in the meantime, I shall merely request a suspension of opinion. Your prefatory letter to "Rimini," I accepted as it was meant—as a public compliment and a private kindness. I am only sorry that it may perhaps operate against you as an inducement, and, with some, a pretext, for attack on the part of the political and personal enemies of both:—not that this can be of much consequence, for in the end the work must be judged by its merits, and in that respect you are well armed. Murray tells me it is going on well, and, you may depend upon it, there is a substratum of poetry which is a foundation for solid and durable fame.

The objections (*if* there be objections, for this is a *pre*sumption, and not an *as*sumption,) will be merely as to the mechanical part, and such, as I stated before, the usual consequence of either novelty or revival. I desired Murray to forward to you a pamphlet with two things of mine in it, the most part of both of them, and of one in particular, *written* before *others* of my composing, which have preceded them in *publication*; they are neither of them of much pretension, nor intended for it. You will perhaps wonder at my dwelling so much and so frequently on former subjects and scenes; but the fact is, that I found them fading fast from my memory; and I was, at the same time, so partial to their *place*, (and events connected with it,) that I have stamped them, while I could, in such colours as I could trust to *now*, but might have confused and misapplied *hereafter*, had I longer delayed the attempted delineation.

LETTER XII.

March 14, 1816.

DEAR HUNT,

I send you six orchestra tickets for Drury Lane, countersigned by me, which makes the admission *free*—which I explain, that the door-keeper may not impose upon you; they are for the best place in the house, but can only be used *one* at a time. I have left the *dates unfilled*, and you can *take* your own nights, which I should suppose would be Kean's: the seat is in the orchestra. I have inserted the name of Mr. H——, a friend of yours, in case you like to transfer to him—do not forget to fill up the dates for such days as you choose to select.

Yours, ever truly,

BYRON.

FRAGMENTS OF LETTERS,

The rest of which has been mutilated or lost.

FRAGMENT I.

—— good of "Rimini,"—Sir Henry Englefield, a mighty man in the blue circles, and a very clever man any where, sent to Murray, in terms of the highest eulogy; and with regard to the common reader my *sister* and *cousin* (who are now all my family, and the last since gone away to be married) were in fixed perusal and delight with it, and they are "not critical," but fair, natural, unaffected, and understanding persons.

Frere, and all the arch-literati, I hear, are also unanimous in a high opinion of the poem. "I hear this by the way—but I will send."

FRAGMENT II.

With regard to the E. B. I have no concealments, nor desire to have any, from you

or yours: the suppression occurred (I am as sure as I can be of any thing) in the manner stated: I have never regretted that, but very often the composition—that is the *humeur* of a great deal in it. As to the quotation you allude to, I have no right, nor indeed desire, to prevent it; but, on the contrary, in common with all other writers, I do and ought to take it as a compliment.

The paper on the Methodists was sure to raise the bristles of the godly. I *redde* it, and agree with the writer on one point in which you and he perhaps differ; that an addiction to poetry is very generally the result of "an uneasy mind in an uneasy body;" disease or deformity have been the attendants of many of our best. Collins mad—Chatterton, *I* think, mad — Cowper mad — Pope crooked — Milton blind—Gray—(I have heard that the last was afflicted by an incurable and very grievous distemper, though not generally known) and others——. I have somewhere redde, however, that poets *rarely* go mad. I suppose the writer means that their insanity effervesces and evaporates in verse—may be so.

I have not had time nor paper to attack your *system*, which ought to be done, were it only because it is a *system*. So, by and by, have at you.

Yours ever,

BYRON.

CONTEMPORARY MEMOIRS.

MR. MOORE.

I THOUGHT Thomas Moore, when I first knew him, as delightful a person as one could imagine. He could not help being an interesting one; and his sort of talent has this advantage in it, that being of a description intelligible to all, the possessor is equally sure of present and future fame. I never received a visit from him, but I felt as if I had been talking with Prior or Sir Charles Sedley. His acquaintance with Lord Byron began by talking of a duel. With me it commenced in as gallant a way, though of a different sort. I had cut up an opera of his, (the Blue Stock-

ing,) as unworthy of so great a wit. He came to see me, saying I was very much in the right; and an intercourse took place, which I might have enjoyed to this day, had he valued his real fame as much as I did. I mean to assume nothing in saying this, either as a dispenser of reputation, or as a man of undisputed reputation myself. I live too much out of the world, and differ too plainly with what is in it, to pretend to be either one or the other. But Mr. Moore, in his serious as well as gayer verses, talked a great deal of independence and openness, and the contempt of commonplaces; and on this account he owed it to his admirers not to disappoint them. He was bound to them the more especially, when they put hearty faith in him, and when they thought they paid him a compliment in being independent themselves. The reader has seen to what I allude. At the time I am speaking of, my acquaintance, perhaps, was of some little service to Mr. Moore; at least, he thought so. I am sure I never valued myself on any service which a very hearty admiration of his wit and independence could render him. It

was involuntary on my part; I could not have helped it; and, at all times, the advantage of personal intercourse would have been on my side.

Mr. Moore was lively, polite, bustling, full of amenities and acquiescences, into which he contrived to throw a sort of roughening of cordiality, like the crust of old port. It seemed a happiness to him to say "Yes." There was just enough of the Irishman in him to flavour his speech and manner. He was a little particular, perhaps, in his orthöepy, but not more so than became a poet; and he appeared to me the last man in the world to cut his country, even for the sake of high life. As to his person, all the world knows that he is as little of stature, as he is great in wit. It is said, that an illustrious personage, in a fit of playfulness, once threatened to put him into the wine-cooler; a proposition, which Mr. Moore took to be more royal than polite. A Spanish gentleman, whom I met on the Continent, and who knew him well, said, in his energetic English, which he spoke none the worse for a wrong vowel or so: "Now,

there's *Mooerr*, Thomas *Mooerr*; I look upon *Mooerr* as an active little *men*." This is true. He reminds us of those active little great men who abound so remarkably in Clarendon's history. Like them, he would have made an excellent practical partisan, and it would have done him good. Horseback, and a little Irish fighting, would have seen fair play with his good living, and kept his look as juvenile as his spirit. His forehead is bony and full of character, with "bumps" of wit, large and radiant, enough to transport a phrenologist. His eyes are as dark and fine, as you would wish to see under a set of vine-leaves; his mouth generous and good-humoured, with dimples; his nose sensual, prominent, and at the same time the reverse of aquiline. There is a very peculiar character in it, as if it were looking forward, and scenting a feast or an orchard. The face, upon the whole, is Irish, not unruffled with care and passion; but festivity is the predominant expression. When Mr. Moore was a child, he is said to have been eminently handsome, a cupid for a picture; and notwithstanding the tricks which both joy

and sorrow have played with his face, you can fancy as much. It was a recollection, perhaps, to this effect, that induced his friend, Mr. Atkinson, to say, one afternoon, in defending him from the charge of libertinism, "Sir, they may talk of Moore as they please; but I tell you what; I always consider him," (and this argument he thought conclusive,) "I always consider my friend, Thomas Moore, as an infant sporting on the bosom of Venus." There was no contesting this; and, in truth, the hearers were very little disposed to contest it, Mr. Atkinson having hit upon a defence which was more logical in spirit than chronological in the image. When conscience comes, a man's impulses must take thought; but till then, poetry is only the eloquent and irresistible developement of the individual's nature; and Mr. Moore's wildest verses were a great deal more innocent than could enter into the imaginations of the old libertines who thought they had a right to use them. I must not, in this portrait, leave out his music. He plays and sings with great taste on the piano-forte, and is known as a graceful composer. His voice,

which is a little hoarse in speaking, (at least, I used to think so,) softens into a breath, like that of the flute, when singing. In speaking, he is emphatic in rolling the letter *r*, perhaps out of a despair of being able to get rid of the national peculiarity. The structure of his versification, when I knew him, was more artificial than it has been since; and in his serious compositions suited him better. He has hardly faith enough in what he does, to give way to his impulses, except when they are lively; and artificial thoughts demand a similar embodiment. But he contemplated the fine, easy-playing, muscular style of Dryden, with a sort of perilous pleasure. I remember his quoting with delight a couplet of Dryden's, which came with a particular grace out of his mouth:

> Let honour and preferment go for gold:
> But glorious beauty isn't to be sold.

Beside the pleasure I took in Mr. Moore's society as a man of wit, I had a great esteem for him as a man of candour and independence. His letters were full of all that was

pleasant in him. As I was a critic at that time, and in the habit of giving my opinion of his works in the Examiner, he would write me his *opinion* of the *opinion*, with a mixture of good-humour, admission, and deprecation, so truly delightful, and a sincerity of criticism on my own writings so extraordinary for so courteous a man, though with abundance of balm and eulogy, that never any subtlety of compliment could surpass it; and with all my self-confidence, I never ceased to think that the honour was on my side, and that I could only deserve such candour of intercourse by being as ingenuous as himself. This admiring regard for him he completed by his behaviour to an old patron of his, who not thinking it polite to retain him openly by his side, proposed to facilitate his acceptance of a place under the Tories; an accommodation which Mr. Moore rejected as an indignity. If any body at that time had told me, that our new and cordial Anacreon, who counted a lofty spirit among his luxuries, could do a disingenuous thing, or sacrifice a cause or a free sentiment on the fat altars of aristocracy,—a sweet-smell-

ing savour unto a lord,—I should have answered, that all that might be in the common course of the prose of this life; but that nobody knew what superiority there was to conventional deductions in the very weaknesses of a poet.*

I remember our astonishment in Italy (Lord Byron's included) at the flaming panegyric passed by Mr. Moore upon England, and all things English, at a dinner in Paris. It was his farewell dinner, if I recollect, when leaving Paris for London. Either the English panegyric or the Irish Melodies were certainly much in the wrong; nor is it easy to decide what Captain Rock would have said to it. But the invective against Rousseau and poor Madame de Warens, in Mr. Moore's Rhymes on the Road, was still more startling. Madame de Warens is not a person to be approved of in all respects, perhaps in very few. She had a kind heart, but a dangerous, ill-regulated will, and might at least have abstained from loving the

* For the circumstance which more immediately occasioned these remarks, see p. 58.

sour-faced gardener, and sacrificing her natural love of truth to degrading secrecies. But nobody thinks otherwise of her than she was; and Mr. Moore's denouncement was, to say the least of it, superfluous. These things may be safely left to the heart of the community. The evil mixed with them may even suggest a better good, if discussed handsomely and sincerely. Madame de Warens was a means of setting one of the most extraordinary minds that have appeared in the world, upon speculations not the less interesting to humanity, because coteries, not so good as herself, choose to cant about them. Mr. Grainger, the biographical painter of portraits, who was a clergyman, and did not think it necessary to show a "zeal beyond knowledge," would have been charitable enough to call her "open-hearted," which is an epithet he does not scruple to give even to the meretricious Duchess of Cleveland. Mr. Moore, on the other hand, instead of taking her along with him as he ought to do, and trying how kindly he can unite his own moral improvement with that of "exquisite mothers" in general, thinks fit to shake his Anacreon

laurels at her, and call her a naughty woman. I would have done, if I were he, with this two-o'clock-in-the morning penitence, with maudlin tears in its eyes; and set myself to the task of reformation in a more masculine and social style. It is not handsome of him; it is not grateful; it is not gallant. Human beings are all worth being mentioned with common humanity; and we make poor amends for offences we may have committed ourselves, by reproaching those who have sinned with us. The great thing in this world, is to learn what to do, and how to carry humanity forward; not to reproach any one; no, not even ourselves. We should reproach ourselves only for petty and useless feelings, and the want of a real sympathy. If Mr. Moore, as he once told me he did, thinks it useless to attempt improvement in this world, he is at least not very reasonable in thinking it necessary to repeat maudlin common places, for the sake of their eternal reproduction; for they do nothing else. The world will continue to laugh with his gaieties, and think nothing of his gravities;

let him give as many premiums for pleasure and penitence, as he may.

A word respecting the suppression of Lord Byron's auto-biography. The public have seen a letter of Mr. Moore's, stating how it was that the manuscript of his friend's Life came to be destroyed, and how his Lordship's family would have reimbursed him for the loss of the profits; an offer which, from feelings and considerations "unnecessary" then to explain," he "respectfully but peremptorily declined." The meaning of this is, that Lord Byron presented Mr. Moore with the Life for the purpose of turning it into money; that Mr. Moore did so, and got two thousand guineas for it (a poor sum, by the by, if it was all he was to have): and that although he had no objection to receive money in this way, he had in any other. I do not insinuate that he might as well have accepted the money then offered; but Mr. Moore, on this and other occasions, has been willing to give the commercial British public to understand, that he has a horror of pecuniary obligations, though,

it seems, he has no objection to pecuniary's worth. This, I confess, is a splitting of hairs, which I do not understand. If a friend is worth being obliged to, I do not see how a man is less obliged, or has less reason to be so, by accepting his manuscripts than his money. It is an escape, not from the thing, but the name; and if I were the obliger, I confess I should draw a different conclusion from what Lord Byron may have done, respecting the real regard or spirit of the man, who thought so ingeniously of my Life, and so awfully of my guineas. That the tenure of the noble Bard's respect in this matter was indeed very precarious, is evident from the *bill* he brought in against Mr. Dallas; a leaf from the ledger of his Lordship's memory, which, I think, must have startled Mr. Moore.

Mr. Dallas having made a preposterous statement of the value of his zeal and advice, in encouraging Lord Byron to be a poet, and observed that it far outweighed, in his opinion, the six or seven hundred pounds obtained by the copyright of "Childe Harold," which the noble Bard had given him, his Lordship

makes a per contra statement, as creditor, in the following

"MEMORANDUM.

Two hundred pounds before I was twenty years old.

Copyright of Childe Harold, 600*l.*

Copyright of Corsair, 500*l.*

And 50*l.* for his nephew on entering the army; *in all*, 1350*l.* and not 6 or 700*l.* as the worthy accountant reckons."

Here the noble Lord is clearly of opinion, that money and money's worth are one and the same thing. He was therefore prepared, could occasion have possibly arisen, to bring in a similar account to Mr. Moore, for the sum of 2000*l.* The truth is, Mr. Moore's notion in this matter is a commonplace; and I used to think him higher above commonplaces than he is. I should look upon myself as more tied, and rendered more dependent, by living as he does among the great, and flattering the mistakes of the vulgar, than by accepting thousands from individuals whom I loved. When I came to know Lord Byron as I did, I could no more have accepted his manuscripts than his

money, unless I could prove to myself that I had a right to them in the way of business. Till then, I would as soon have taken the one as the other, if I took any. The reader shall see what I have done in that way, and I am not ashamed of it, though I confess I would willingly have to make the acknowledgment to a different state of society. One does not like to be thought ill of by any body ; but if I am to choose, I would rather have the good construction of half a dozen individuals really generous, than the good word of all the multitudes, who are agreed only to flatter, to feed on, and to fight shy of one another.

As it is not pleasant to leave off speaking of such a man with an ill taste in one's mouth, (the champagne indeed in the thought of him hardly allows it to be possible,) I will conclude this notice with a memorandum of him fourteen years ago. It is one of my prison recollections. I remember when I was showing him and Lord Byron the prison-garden, a smart shower came on, which induced Moore to button up his coat, and push on for the interior. He returned instantly, blushing up to the eyes.

He had forgotten the lameness of his noble friend. "How much better you behaved," said he to me afterwards, "in not hastening to get out of the rain! I quite forgot, at the moment, whom I was walking with." I told him, that the virtue was involuntary on my part, having been occupied in conversation with his Lordship, which he was not; and that to forget a man's lameness involved a compliment in it, which the sufferer could not dislike." "True," says he; "but the devil of it was, that I was forced to remember it, by his not coming up. I could not in decency go on; and to return was very awkward." This anxiety appeared to me very amiable.

MR. SHELLEY.

WITH A CRITICISM ON HIS GENIUS, AND MR. TRELAWNEY'S NARRATIVE OF HIS LOSS AT SEA.

MR. SHELLEY, when he died, was in his thirtieth year. His figure was tall and slight, and his constitution consumptive. He was subject to violent spasmodic pains, which would sometimes force him to lie on the ground till they were over; but he had always a kind word to give to those about him, when his pangs allowed him to speak. In this organization, as well as in some other respects, he resembled the German poet, Schiller. Though well-turned, his shoulders were bent a little, owing to premature thought and trouble. The same causes had touched his hair with grey;

and though his habits of temperance and exercise gave him a remarkable degree of strength, it is not supposed that he could have lived many years. He used to say, that he had lived three times as long as the calendar gave out; which he would prove, between jest and earnest, by some remarks on Time,

> "That would have puzzled that stout Stagyrite."

Like the Stagyrite's, his voice was high and weak. His eyes were large and animated, with a dash of wildness in them; his face small, but well-shaped, particularly the mouth and chin, the turn of which was very sensitive and graceful. His complexion was naturally fair and delicate, with a colour in the cheeks. He had brown hair, which, though tinged with grey, surmounted his face well, being in considerable quantity, and tending to a curl. His side-face upon the whole was deficient in strength, and his features would not have told well in a bust; but when fronting and looking at you attentively, his aspect had a certain seraphical character that would have suited a portrait of John the Baptist, or the

angel whom Milton describes as holding a reed "tipt with fire." Nor would the most religious mind, had it known him, have objected to the comparison; for, with all his scepticism, Mr. Shelley's disposition may be truly said to have been any thing but irreligious. A person of much eminence for piety in our times has well observed, that the greatest want of religious feeling is not to be found among the greatest infidels, but among those who never think of religion but as a matter of course. The leading feature of Mr. Shelley's character, may be said to have been a natural piety. He was pious towards nature, towards his friends, towards the whole human race, towards the meanest insect of the forest. He did himself an injustice with the public, in using the popular name of the Supreme Being inconsiderately. He identified it solely with the most vulgar and tyrannical notions of a God made after the worst human fashion; and did not sufficiently reflect, that it was often used by a juster devotion to express a sense of the great Mover of the universe. An impatience in contradicting worldly and pernicious notions

of a supernatural power, led his own aspirations to be misconstrued; for though, in the severity of his dialectics, and particularly in moments of despondency, he sometimes appeared to be hopeless of what he most desired, —and though he justly thought, that a Divine Being would prefer the increase of benevolence and good before any praise, or even recognition of himself, (a reflection worth thinking of by the intolerant,) yet there was in reality no belief to which he clung with more fondness than that of some great pervading "Spirit of Intellectual Beauty;" as may be seen in his aspirations on that subject. He said to me in the cathedral at Pisa, while the organ was playing, "What a divine religion might be found out, if charity were really made the principle of it, instead of faith!"

Music affected him deeply. He had also a delicate perception of the beauties of sculpture. It is not one of the least evidences of his conscientious turn of mind, that with the inclination, and the power, to surround himself in Italy with all the graces of life, he made no sort of attempt that way; finding

other use for his money, and not always satisfied with himself for indulging even in the luxury of a boat. When he bought elegancies of any kind, it was to give away. Boating was his great amusement. He loved the mixture of action and repose which he found in it; and delighted to fancy himself gliding away to Utopian isles, and bowers of enchantment. But he would give up any pleasure to do a deed of kindness. "His life," says Mrs. Shelley, "was spent in the contemplation of nature, in arduous study, or in acts of kindness and affection. He was an elegant scholar, and a profound metaphysician. Without possessing much scientific knowledge, he was unrivalled in the justness and extent of his observations on natural objects: he knew every plant by its name, and was familiar with the history and habits of every production of the earth: he could interpret, without a fault, each appearance in the sky; and the varied phenomena of heaven and earth filled him with deep emotion. He made his study and reading-room of the shadowed copse, the stream, the lake, and the waterfall."—*Preface*

to his Posthumous Poems, p. 14. "The comparative solitude," observes the same lady, "in which Mr. Shelley lived, was the occasion that he was personally known to few; and his fearless enthusiasm in the cause which he considered the most sacred upon earth, the improvement of the moral and physical state of mankind, was the chief reason why he, like other illustrious reformers, was pursued by hatred and calumny. No man was ever more devoted than he to the endeavour of making those around him happy; no man ever possessed friends more unfeignedly attached to him. Before the critics contradict me, let them appeal to any one who had ever known him. To see him was to love him."—*Ibid.* This is a high character, and I, for one, know it was deserved. I should be glad to know, how many wives of Mr. Shelley's calumniators could say as much of their husbands; or how many of the critics would believe them, if they did.

Mr. Shelley's comfort was a sacrifice to the perpetual contradiction between the professions of society and their practice; between "the

shows of things and the desires of the mind." Temperament and early circumstances conspired to make him a reformer, at a time of life when few begin to think for themselves; and it was his misfortune, as far as immediate reputation was concerned, that he was thrown upon society with a precipitancy and vehemence, which rather startled them with fear for themselves, than allowed them to become sensible of the love and zeal that impelled him. He was like a spirit that had darted out of its orb, and found itself in another planet. I used to tell him that he had come from the planet Mercury. When I heard of the catastrophe that overtook him, it seemed as if this spirit, not sufficiently constituted like the rest of the world, to obtain their sympathy, yet gifted with a double portion of love for all living things, had been found dead in a solitary corner of the earth, its wings stiffened, its warm heart cold; the relics of a misunderstood nature slain by the ungenial elements.

That the utility, however, of so much benevolence was not lost to the world, whatever difference of opinion may exist as to its occa-

sional mode of showing itself, will be evinced, I hope, by the following pages.

Mr. Shelley was the eldest son of Sir Timothy Shelley, Bart. of Castle-Goring, in Sussex; and was born at Field-Place, in that county, the 4th of August, 1792.*

It is difficult, under any circumstances, to speak with proper delicacy of the living connexions of the dead; but it is no violation of decorum to observe (what, indeed, the reader knows already, if he knows any thing of Parliament,) that the family connexions of Mr.

* Gibbon has a note in his Decline and Fall, in which, with a greater degree of romance than might have been expected of him, even with all his self-love as a man of letters, he "exhorts" the noble family of the Spensers to consider the Fairy Queen as the "brightest jewel in their coronet." The Shelleys are of old standing, and have branched out into three several baronetcies, one of which has become the representative of the kindred of Sir Philip Sidney. Mr. Shelley had a respect for that distinction, carelessly as he contemplated the other family honours. He would have allowed no claim for superiority to be put in there. But if I had a right to speak like Gibbon, and if affection might be allowed to anticipate the voice of posterity, I would "exhort" in like manner the race of the Shelleys to pierce through the din of existing prejudices, and consider no sound so fair as the name of their aspiring kinsman.

Shelley belonged to a small party in the House of Commons, itself belonging to another party. They were Whig Aristocrats; a distinction that, within a late period, has been handsomely merged by some of the bearers of it into the splendour of a more prevailing universality. To a man of genius, endowed with a metaphysical acuteness to discern truth and falsehood, and a strong sensibility to give way to his sense of it, such an origin, however respectable in the ordinary point of view, was not the very luckiest that could have happened for the purpose of keeping him within ordinary bounds. With what feelings is Truth to open its eyes upon this world among the most respectable of our mere party gentry? Among licensed contradictions of all sorts? among the Christian's doctrines and the worldly practices? Among fox-hunters and their chaplains? among beneficed loungers, noli-episcoparian bishops, rakish old gentlemen, and more startling young ones, who are old in the folly of *knowingness?* In short, among all those professed demands of what is right and noble, mixed with real inculcations of what is wrong and full of hypocrisy, which

have been so admirably exposed by Mr. Bentham, and which he has fortunately helped some of our best living statesmen to leave out of the catalogue of their ambitions.

Mr. Shelley began to think at a very early age, and to think too of these anomalies. He saw, that at every step in life some compromise was expected between a truth which he was told not to violate, and a colouring and double-meaning of it, which forced him upon the violation.

Doubtless there are numbers of young men who discern nothing of all this; and who, comparatively speaking, become respectable tellers of truth in spite of it. These are the honourable part of the orthodox; good-natured fathers and husbands, conscientious clergymen, respectable men in various walks of life, who, thinking they abide by the ideas that have been set before them, really have very few ideas of any thing, and are only remarkable for affording specimens of every sort of commonplace, comfortable or unhappy. On the other hand, numbers of young men get a sense of this confusion of principles, if not with a direct

and logical consciousness, yet with an instinct for turning it to account. Even some of these, by dint of a genial nature, and upon the same principle on which a heathen priest would eschew the vices of his mythology, turn out decent members of society. But how many others are spoilt for ever! How many victims to this confusion of truth and falsehood, apparently flourishing, but really callous or unhappy, are to be found in all quarters of the community; men who profess opinions which contradict their whole lives; takers of oaths, which they dispense with the very thought of; subscribers to articles which they doubt, or even despise; triflers with their hourly word for gain; expedient statesmen; ready hirelings of power; sneering disbelievers in good; teachers to their own children of what has spoilt themselves, and has rendered their existence a dull and selfish mockery.

Whenever a character like Mr. Shelley's appears in society, it must be considered with reference to these systems. Others may consent to be spoilt by them, and to see their

fellow-creatures spoilt. He was a looker-on of a different nature.

With this jumble, then, of truth and falsehood in his head, and a genius born to detect it, though perhaps never quite able to rid itself of the injury, (for if ever he deviated into an error unworthy of him, it was in occasionally condescending, though for the kindest purposes, to use a little double-dealing.) Mr. Shelley was sent to Eton, and afterwards to the University of Oxford. At Eton, a Quarterly Reviewer recollects him setting trees on fire with a burning-glass; a proceeding which the critic sets down to his natural taste for destruction. A more impartial and not less philosophic observer might have attributed it to the natural curiosity of genius. Perhaps, if the Reviewer recollected Mr. Shelley, Mr. Shelley no less recollected him as one of the school-tyrants against whom he rose up, in opposition to the system of fagging. Against this custom he formed a conspiracy; and for a time made it pause, at least as far as his own person was concerned. Mr. Shelley's feelings

at this period of his life are touchingly and powerfully described in the dedication of the *Revolt of Islam.*

"Thoughts of great deeds were mine, dear Friend, when first
The clouds which wrap this world from youth did pass.
I do remember well the hour which burst
My spirit's sleep: a fresh May-day it was,
When I walk'd forth upon the glittering grass,
And wept, I knew not why; until there rose
From the near school-room, voices, that, alas!
Were but one echo from a world of woes—
The harsh and grating strife of tyrants and of foes.

"And then I clasped my hands, and look'd around—
But none was near to mock my streaming eyes,
Which poured their warm drops on the sunny ground.—
So without shame I spake; 'I will be wise,
And just, and free, and mild, if in me lies
Such power; for I grow weary to behold
The selfish and the strong still tyrannise
Without reproach or check.' I then controlled
My tears; my heart grew calm, and I was meek and bold.

"And from that hour did I, with earnest thought,
Heap knowledge from forbidden mines of lore;
Yet nothing that my tyrants knew or taught
I cared to learn; but from that secret store
Wrought linked armour for my soul, before
It might walk forth to war among mankind."

Mr. Shelley retained all his kindness and energy, but corrected, as he here aspires to do, the irritability of his temper. No man, by the account of all who lived with him, ever turned it into greater sweetness. The Reviewer, by the usual process of tyranny, became a slave.

Mr. Shelley, I believe, was taken from Eton before the regular period for leaving school. His unconventional spirit, penetrating, sincere, and demanding the reason and justice of things, was found to be inconvenient. At Oxford it was worse. Logic was there put into his hands; and he used it in the most uncompromising manner. The more important the proposition, the more he thought himself bound to investigate it: the greater the demand upon his assent, the less, upon their own principle of reasoning, he thought himself bound to grant it. The result was expulsion.

Conceive a young man of Mr. Shelley's character, with no better experience of the kindness and sincerity of those whom he had perplexed, thrown forth into society, to form his own judgments, and pursue his own career.

It was "*Emilius out in the World*," but formed by his own tutorship. There is a Novel, under that title, written by the German, La Fontaine, which has often reminded me of him. The hero of another, by the same author, called the "*Reprobate*," still more resembles him. His way of proceeding was entirely after the fashion of those guileless, but vehement hearts, which not being well replied to by their teachers, and finding them hostile to inquiry, add to a natural love of truth all the passionate ardour of a generous and devoted protection of it. Mr. Shelley had met with Mr. Godwin's "Political Justice;" and he seemed to breathe, for the first time, in an open and bright atmosphere. He resolved to square all his actions by what he conceived to be the strictest justice, without any consideration for the opinions of those, whose little exercise of that virtue towards himself, ill-fitted them, he thought, for better teachers, and as ill warranted him in deferring to the opinions of the world whom they guided. That he did some extraordinary things in consequence, is admitted: that he did many noble ones, and all

with sincerity, is well known to his friends, and will be admitted by all sincere persons. Let those who are so fond of exposing their own natures, by attributing every departure from ordinary conduct to bad motives, ask themselves what conduct could be more extraordinary in their eyes, and at the same time less attributable to a bad motive, than the rejection of an estate for the love of a principle. Yet Mr. Shelley rejected one. He had only to become a yea and nay man in the House of Commons, to be one of the richest men in Sussex. He declined it, and lived upon a comparative pittance. Even the fortune that he would ultimately have inherited, as secured to his person, was petty in the comparison.

We will relate another anecdote, which the conventional will not find it so difficult to quarrel with. It trenches upon that extraordinary privilege to indulge one sex at the expense of the other, which they guard with so jealous a care, and so many hypocritical faces. The question, we allow, is weighty. We are far from saying it is here settled; but very far are they themselves from having settled it; as

their own writings and writhings, their own statistics, morals, romances, tears, and even jokes, will testify. The case, I understood, was this; for I am bound to declare that I forget who told it me; but it is admirably in character, and not likely to be invented. Mr. Shelley was present at a ball, where he was a person of some importance. Numerous village ladies were there, old and young; and none of the passions were absent, that are accustomed to glance in the eyes, and gossip in the tongues, of similar gatherings together of talk and dress. In the front were seated the rank and fashion of the place. The virtues diminished, as the seats went backward; and at the back of all, unspoken to, but not unheeded, sat blushing a damsel who had been seduced. We do not inquire by whom; probably by some well-dressed gentleman in the room, who thought himself entitled nevertheless to the conversation of the most flourishing ladies present, and who naturally thought so, because he had it. That sort of thing happens every day. It was expected, that the young squire would take out one of these ladies to dance. What is the con-

sternation, when they see him making his way to the back benches, and handing forth, with an air of consolation and tenderness, the object of all the virtuous scorn of the room! the person whom that other gentleman, wrong as he had been towards her, and "wicked" as the ladies might have allowed him to be towards the fair sex in general, would have shrunk from touching!—Mr. Shelley, it was found, was equally unfit for school tyrannies, for universities, and for the chaste orthodoxy of squires' tables. So he went up to town.

The philosophic observer will confess, that our young author's experiences in education, politics, and gentlemanly morality, were not of a nature to divert him from his notions of justice, however calculated to bring him into trouble. Had he now behaved himself pardonably in the eyes of the orthodox, he would have gone to London with the resolution of sowing his wild oats, and becoming a decent member of society; that is to say, he would have seduced a few maid-servants, or at least haunted the lobbies; and then bestowed the remnant of his constitution upon some young

lady of his own rank in life, and settled into a proper church-and-king man, perhaps a member of the Suppression of Vice. This is the proper routine, and gives one a right to be didactic. Alas! Mr. Shelley did not do so; and bitterly had he to repent, not that he did not do it, but that he married while yet a stripling, and that the wife whom he took was not of a nature to appreciate his understanding, or perhaps to come from contact with it, uninjured in what she had of her own. They separated by mutual consent, after the birth of two children. To this measure his enemies would hardly have demurred; especially as the marriage was disapproved by Mr. Shelley's family, and the lady of inferior rank. It might have been regarded even as something like making amends. But to one thing they would strongly have objected. He proceeded, in the spirit of Milton's doctrines, to pay his court to another lady. We wish we could pursue the story in the same tone: but now came the greatest pang of Mr. Shelley's life. He was residing at Bath, when news came to him that his wife had destroyed herself. It was a heavy blow to him; and he

never forgot it. Persons who riot in a debauchery of scandal, delighting in endeavouring to pull down every one to their own standard, and in repeating the grossest charges in the grossest words, have taken advantage of this passage in Mr. Shelley's life, to show their total ignorance of his nature, and to harrow up, one would think, the feelings of every person connected with him, by the most wanton promulgation of names, and the most odious falsehoods. Luckily, the habitual contempt of truth which ever accompanies the love of calumny, serves to refute it with all those whose good opinion is worth having. So leaving the scandal in those natural sinks, to which all the calumnies and falsehoods of the time hasten, we resume our remarks with the honourable and the decent. As little shall we dwell upon the conduct of one or two persons of better repute, who instead of being warned against believing every malignant rumour by the nature of their own studies, and as if they had been jealous of a zeal in behalf of mankind, which they had long been accused of merging in speculations less noble, did not disdain to circulate

the gossip of the scandalous as far as other countries, betraying a man to repulses, who was yearning with the love of his species; and confounding times, places, and circumstances, in the eagerness of their paltry credulity. Among other falsehoods it was stated, that Mr. Shelley, at that time living with his wife, had abruptly communicated to her his intention of separating; upon which the other had run to a pond at the end of the garden, and drowned herself. The fact, as we have seen, is, that they had been living apart for some time, during which the lady was accountable to no one but herself. We could relate another story of the catastrophe that took place, did we not feel sincerely for all parties concerned, and wish to avoid every species of heart-burning. Nobody could lament it more bitterly than Mr. Shelley. For a time, it tore his being to pieces; nor is there a doubt, that however deeply he was accustomed to reason on the nature and causes of evil, and on the steps necessary to be taken for opposing it, he was not without remorse for having no better exercised his judgment with regard to the degree of intellect he had allied

himself with, and for having given rise to a premature independence of conduct in one unequal to the task. The lady was greatly to be pitied; so was the survivor. Let the school-tyrants, the University refusers of argument, and the orthodox sowers of their wild oats, with myriads of unhappy women behind them, rise up in judgment against him. Honester men will not be hindered from doing justice to sincerity, wherever they find it; nor be induced to blast the memory of a man of genius and benevolence, for one painful passage in his life, which he might have avoided, had he been no better than his calumniators.

On the death of this unfortunate lady, Mr. Shelley married the daughter of Mr. Godwin; and resided at Great Marlow in Buckinghamshire, where he was a blessing to the poor. His charity, though liberal, was not weak. He inquired personally into the circumstances of the petitioners; visited the sick in their beds (for he had gone the round of the Hospitals on purpose to be able to practise on occasion); and kept a regular list of industrious poor, whom he assisted with small sums to make up their

accounts.* At Marlow he wrote the *Revolt of Islam*. *Queen Mab* was an earlier production,

* "Another anecdote remains, not the least in interest." (I was speaking, in the Literary Examiner, of an adventure of Mr. Shelley's, at the time he was on a visit to me at Hampstead.) Some years ago, when a house (on the top of the Heath) "was occupied by a person whose name I forget, (and I should suppress it in common humanity, if I did not,) I was returning home to my own, which was at no great distance from it, after the Opera. As I approached my door, I heard strange and alarming shrieks, mixed with the voice of a man. The next day, it was reported by the gossips, that Mr. Shelley, no Christian, (for it was he, who was there,) had brought some 'very strange female' into the house, no better of course than she ought to be. The real Christian had puzzled them. Mr. Shelley, in coming to our house that night, had found a woman lying near the top of the hill, in fits. It was a fierce winter night, with snow upon the ground; and winter loses nothing of its fierceness at Hampstead. My friend, always the promptest as well as most pitying on these occasions, knocked at the first houses he could reach, in order to have the woman taken in. The invariable answer was, that they could not do it. He asked for an outhouse to put her in, while he went for a doctor. Impossible! In vain he assured them she was no impostor. They would not dispute the point with him; but doors were closed, and windows were shut down. Had he lit upon worthy Mr. Park, the philologist, he would assuredly have come, in spite of his Calvinism. But he lived too far off. Had he lit upon you, dear B——n, or

written at the age of seventeen or eighteen, when he married; and it was never published

your neighbour D——e, you would either of you have jumped up from amidst your books or your bed-clothes, and have gone out with him. But the paucity of Christians is astonishing, considering the number of them. Time flies; the poor woman is in convulsions; her son, a young man, lamenting over her. At last my friend sees a carriage driving up to a house at a little distance. The knock is given; the warm door opens; servants and lights pour forth. Now, thought he, is the time. He puts on his best address, which any body might recognize for that of the highest gentleman as well as an interesting individual, and plants himself in the way of an elderly person, who is stepping out of the carriage with his family. He tells his story. They only press on the faster. 'Will you go and see her?' 'No, Sir: there's no necessity for that sort of thing, depend on it . impostors swarm every where: the thing cannot be done; sir, your conduct is extraordinary.' 'Sir,' cried Mr. Shelley at last, assuming a very different appearance, and forcing the flourishing householder to stop out of astonishment, 'I am sorry to say that *your* conduct is *not* extraordinary: and if my own seems to amaze you, I will tell you something that may amaze you a little more, and I hope will frighten you. It is such men as you who madden the spirits and the patience of the poor and wretched: and if ever a convulsion comes in this country, (which is very probable,) recollect what I tell you;—you will have your house, that you refuse to put the miserable woman into, burnt over your head.' 'God bless me, Sir! Dear me, Sir!' exclaimed the

with his consent. He regretted the publication when it did take place some years afterwards, and stated as much in the newspapers, considering it a crude performance, and as not sufficiently entering into the important questions it handled. Yet upon the strength of this young and unpublished work, he was deprived of his two children.

The reader perhaps is not aware, that in this country of England, where the domestic institutions are boasted of as so perfect, and are

frightened wretch, and fluttered into his mansion. The woman was then brought to our house, which was at some distance, and down a bleak path; and Mr. S. and her son were obliged to hold her, till the doctor could arrive. It appeared that she had been attending this son in London, on a criminal charge made against him, the agitation of which had thrown her into the fits on her return. The doctor said that she would inevitably have perished, had she lain there a short time longer. The next day my friend sent mother and son comfortably home to Hendon, where they were well known, and whence they returned him thanks full of gratitude. Now go, ye Pharisees of all sorts, and try if ye can still open your hearts and your doors like the good Samaritan. This man was himself too brought up in a splendid mansion, and might have revelled and rioted in all worldly goods. Yet this was one of the most ordinary of his actions."

apt to be felt as so melancholy,—where freedom of opinion is so much cried up, and the tribunals take so much pains to put it down,—where writers and philosophers in short, and what may be called the unconstituted authorities, have done so much for all the world, and the constituted authorities, particularly the lawyers, have done so little for any body but themselves,*—the reader is perhaps not

* Always excepting Bacon, who can hardly be called a lawyer. His profession was but an accident in his life. It was in philosophy that he lived and moved and had his being; and with it he has moved the world. Experiment was that standing ground which Aristotle desired without knowing it, and on which the great lever has at last been fixed. Mechanical philosophy has not only moved; it will inevitably alter the world; and moral improvements, of all sorts, will follow. Two other lawyers' names must be added not unworthy to follow Bacon's; that of Mr. Bentham, who had no sooner entered the profession, than he got out of it; and that of Henry Brougham; who though he remains a lawyer, presents the singular spectacle of a lawyer, equally active in his lesser calling and his greater, and consenting, perhaps, to realize the gains of the one, only that he may secure the power of pursuing the noblest of all ambitions in the other. Mr. Brougham was "meant for mankind;" and luckily he has not been prevented by the minuter demands on his eyesight, from looking abroad and knowing it. His world is

aware, that in this extraordinary country, any man's children may be taken from him to-morrow, who holds a different opinion from the Lord Chancellor in faith and morals. Hume's, if he had any, might have been taken. Gibbon's might have been taken. The virtuous Condorcet, if he had been an Englishman and a father, would have stood no chance. Plato, for his Republic, would have stood as little; and Mademoiselle de Gournay might have been torn from the arms of her adopted father Montaigne, convicted beyond redemption of seeing farther than the walls of the Court of Chancery. That such things are not done often, we believe: that they may be done oftener than people suspect, we most unfortunately believe also; for they are transacted with closed doors, and the details are forbidden to transpire. Mr. Shelley was convicted of holding the unpublished opinions, which

the world it ought to be,—the noble planet, capable of being added to the number of other planets which have perhaps worked out their moral beauty;—not a mere little despairing corner of it, entitled a court of justice.

his public teachers at the University had not thought fit to reason him out of. He was also charged with not being of the received opinions with regard to the intercourse of the sexes; and his children, a girl and a boy, were taken from him. The persons who succeeded in bereaving him, did not succeed in their application to have the children put under their own management. They were transferred to the care of an old, and I dare say respectable, clergyman of the Church of England; and have long received all the helps to sincerity and perfection, which Mr. Bentham has pointed out in his remarks on that establishment. The rest depends on the natural strength of their understandings, and what reflections they may make when they compare their father's practical Christianity with the theories they will see contradicted all round them. The circumstance deeply affected Mr. Shelley: so much so, that he never afterwards dared to trust himself with mentioning his children to the friend who stood at his side throughout the business, and who was the

dearest friend that he had.* But what additional love it generated in him towards our establishments, and their mode of reasoning, the reader may guess. The friend in question, who had first won his regard by the liberal opinions expressed in the Examiner, and by the unusual mode of advising him not to print a volume of juvenile poems, (an advice which still more unusually was taken,) has given, in that paper, an interesting account of Mr. Shelley's manner of life at this period. I quote from memory, but am correct in the substance. Mr. Shelley, owing to the freedom of his inquiries, as well as to the malignity of his enemies, was said to be keeping a seraglio. His friend, who partook of some of

* The boy is since dead; and Mr. Shelley's son by his second wife, the daughter of Mr. Godwin, is heir to the baronetcy. It seldom falls to the lot of a child to have illustrious descent so heaped upon him; his mother a woman of talents, his father a man of genius, his grandfather, Mr. Godwin, a writer secure of immortality; his grandmother, Mr. Godwin's wife, the celebrated Mary Wollstonecraft; and on the side of Mr. Shelley's ancestors he partakes of the blood of the intellectual as well as patrician family of the Sackvilles.

his opinions, partook of the scandal. This keeper of a seraglio, who in fact was extremely difficult to please in such matters, and who had no idea of love unconnected with sentiment, passed his days like a hermit. He rose early in the morning, walked and read before breakfast, took that meal sparingly, wrote and studied the greater part of the morning, walked and read again, dined on vegetables (for he took neither meat nor wine,) conversed with his friends, (to whom his house was ever open,) again walked out, and usually finished with reading to his wife till ten o'clock, when he went to bed. This was his daily existence. His book was generally Plato, or Homer, or one of the Greek tragedians, or the Bible, in which last he took a great, though peculiar, and often admiring interest. One of his favourite parts was the book of Job. The writings attributed to Solomon he thought too Epicurean, in the modern sense of the word; and in his notions of St. Paul, he agreed with the writer of the work entitled "Not Paul but Jesus." For his Christianity, in the proper sense of the word, he went to the gospel of St.

James, and to the sermon on the Mount by Christ himself, for whose truly divine spirit he entertained the greatest reverence. There was nothing which embittered his reviewers against him more than the knowledge of this fact, and his refusal to identify their superstitions and worldly use of the Christian doctrines with the just idea of a great Reformer and advocate of the many; one, whom they would have been the first to cry out against, had he appeared now. His want of faith, indeed, in one sense of the word, and his exceeding faith in the existence of goodness and the great doctrine of charity, formed a comment, the one on the other, very formidable to the less troublesome constructions of the orthodox.

Some alarmists at Marlow said, that if he went on at this rate, he would make all the poor people infidels. He went on, till ill health and calumny, and the love of his children, forced him abroad. During his residence at Marlow, Mr. Shelley published a "Proposal for putting Reform to the Vote" throughout England; for which purpose, as an earnest of his sincerity, he offered to contribute a hun-

dred pounds. This hundred pounds (which owing to his liberal habits he could very ill spare at the time) he would have done his best to supply, by saving and economizing. It was not uncommon with him to give away all his ready money, and be compelled to take a journey on foot, or on the top of a stage, no matter during what weather. His constitution, though naturally consumptive, had attained, by temperance and exercise, to a surprising power of resisting fatigue. As an instance of his extraordinary generosity, an acquaintance of his, a man of letters, enjoyed from him at that period a pension of a hundred a-year; and he continued to enjoy it, till fortune rendered it superfluous. But the princeliness of his disposition was seen most in his behaviour to his friend, the writer of this memoir, who is proud to relate, that Mr. Shelley once made him a present of fourteen hundred pounds, to extricate him from debt. I was not extricated, for I had not yet learnt to be careful: but the shame of not being so, after such generosity, and the pain which my friend afterwards underwent when I was in trouble and he was

helpless, were the first causes of my thinking of money-matters to any purpose. His last sixpence was ever at my service, had I chosen to share it: his house in Italy would ever have been shared with me, had I thought it right to go thither. I went at last, with happy views for all; and of the three who set up a work against tyranny, am the only one that survive. It is remarkable, that in a poetical epistle written some years ago, and published in the volume of "Posthumous Poems," Mr. Shelley, in alluding to his friend's circumstances, which for the second time were then straitened, only makes an affectionate lamentation that he himself is poor; never once hinting, that he had already drained his purse for his friend.

From Marlow, Mr. Shelley went with his wife and a new family to Italy, where he lived in his usual quiet and retired manner. He had become acquainted with Lord Byron during a former visit to the Continent; and the acquaintance was now renewed. He visited his Lordship at Venice; but it was only latterly that he saw much of him, when they both lived at Pisa. He had the highest admiration

of his Lordship's genius; but they differed, as might be expected, on many other points. Lord Byron thought his philosophy too spiritual and romantic. Mr. Shelley thought his Lordship's too material and despairing. The noble Lord often expressed the highest opinion of his companion's virtues, and of his freedom from selfishness. An account has been published of a voyage to Sicily, in which Mr. Shelley is described as behaving with want of courage. To those who knew him, it is unnecessary to repeat, that the whole account is a fabrication, voyage and all. Lord Byron and he never were in Sicily, nor ever sailed together, except on the Lake of Geneva. Mr. Shelley's bravery was remarkable, and was the ultimate ruin of him. In a scuffle that took place on horseback, in the streets of Pisa, with a hot-headed dragoon, he behaved with a courage so distinguished, and with so much thought for every body but himself, that Lord Byron wondered upon what principle a man could be induced to prefer any other person's life in that manner, before his own. The solution of the difficulty was to be found in their

different views of human nature. Mr. Shelley would have lost his life with pleasure, to set an example of disinterestedness: Lord Byron could do striking public things. Greece, and an admiring public, still re-echo them. But the course of his Lordship's studies had led him to require, that they should be mixed up with other stimulants.

A very melancholy period of my narrative is now arrived. In June 1822, I arrived in Italy, in consequence of the invitation to set up a work with my friend and Lord Byron. Mr. Shelley was passing the summer season at a house he had taken for that purpose on the Gulf of Lerici. He wrote to me at Genoa to say that he hoped "the waves would never part us again;" and, on hearing of my arrival at Leghorn, came thither, accompanied by Mr. Williams, formerly of the 8th Dragoons, who was then on a visit to him. He came to welcome his friend and family, and see us comfortably settled at Pisa. He accordingly went with us to that city, and after remaining in it a few days, took leave on the night of the 7th July, to return with Mr. Williams to Lerici,

meaning to come back to us shortly. In a day or two the voyagers were missed. The afternoon of the 8th had been stormy, with violent squalls from the south-west. A night succeeded, broken up with that tremendous thunder and lightning, which appals the stoutest seaman in the Mediterranean, dropping its bolts in all directions, more like melted brass, or liquid pillars of fire, than any thing we conceive of lightning in our northern climate. The suspense and anguish of their friends need not be dwelt upon. A dreadful interval took place of more than a week, during which every inquiry and every fond hope were exhausted. At the end of that period our worst fears were confirmed. The following narrative of the particulars is from the pen of Mr. Trelawney, a friend of Lord Byron's, who had not long been acquainted with Mr. Shelley, but entertained the deepest regard for him. On the present occasion, nothing could surpass his generous and active sympathy. During the whole of the proceedings that took place, Mr. Shelley's and Mr. Williams's friends were indebted to Mr. Trelawney for every kind of

attention: the great burden of inquiry fell upon him; and he never ceased his good offices, either then or afterwards, till he had done every thing that could have been expected to be done, either of the humblest or the highest friend.

MR. TRELAWNEY'S NARRATIVE OF THE LOSS OF THE BOAT CONTAINING MR. SHELLEY AND MR. WILLIAMS, ON THE 8TH OF JULY, 1822, OFF THE COAST OF ITALY. (NOW FIRST PUBLISHED.)

"Mr Shelley, Mr. Williams (formerly of the 8th Dragoons), and one seaman, Charles Vivian, left Villa Magni near Lerici, a small town situate in the Bay of Spezia, on the 30th of June, at twelve o'clock, and arrived the same night at Leghorn. Their boat had been built for Mr. Shelley at Genoa by a captain in the navy. It was twenty-four feet long, eight in the beam, schooner-rigged, with gaft topsails, &c. and drew four feet water. On Monday, the 8th of July, at the same hour, they got under weigh to return home, having on board a quantity of household articles, four hundred dollars, a small canoe, and some books and manuscripts. At

half past twelve they made all sail out of the harbour with a light and favourable breeze, steering direct for Spezia. I had likewise weighed anchor to accompany them a few miles out in Lord Byron's schooner, the Bolivar; but there was some demur about papers from the guard-boat; and they, fearful of losing the breeze, sailed without me. I re-anchored, and watched my friends, till their boat became a speck on the horizon, which was growing thick and dark, with heavy clouds moving rapidly, and gathering in the south-west quarter. I then retired to the cabin, where I had not been half an hour, before a man on deck told me, a heavy squall had come on. We let go another anchor. The boats and vessels in the roads were scudding past us in all directions to get into the harbour; and in a moment it blew a hard gale from the south-west, the sea, from excessive smoothness, foaming, breaking, and getting up into a very heavy swell. The wind, having shifted, was now directly against my friends. I felt confident they would be obliged to bear off for Leghorn; and, being anxious to hear of their safety, stayed on board

till a late hour, but saw nothing of them. The violence of the wind did not continue above an hour; it then gradually subsided; and at eight o'clock, when I went on shore, it was almost a calm. It, however, blew hard at intervals during the night, with rain, and thunder and lightning. The lightning struck the mast of a vessel close to us, shivering it to splinters, killing two men, and wounding others. From these circumstances, becoming greatly alarmed for the safety of the voyagers, a note was dispatched to Mr. Shelley's house at Lerici, the reply to which stated that nothing had been heard of him and his friend, which augmented our fears to such a degree, that couriers were dispatched on the whole line of coast from Leghorn to Nice, to ascertain if they had put in any where, or if there had been any wreck, or indication of losses by sea. I immediately started for Via Reggio, having lost sight of the boat in that direction. My worst fears were almost confirmed on my arrival there, by news that a small canoe, two empty water-barrels, and a bottle, had been found on the shore, which things I recognised as belonging to the boat. I had still, however,

warm hopes that these articles had been thrown overboard to clear them from useless lumber in the storm; and it seemed a general opinion that they had missed Leghorn, and put into Elba or Corsica, as nothing more was heard for eight days. This state of suspense becoming intolerable, I returned from Spezia to Via Reggio, where my worst fears were confirmed by the information that two bodies had been washed on shore, one on that night very near the town, which, by the dress and stature, I knew to be Mr. Shelley's. Mr. Keats's last volume of "Lamia," "Isabella," &c. being open in the jacket pocket, confirmed it beyond a doubt. The body of Mr. Williams was subsequently found near a tower on the Tuscan shore, about four miles from his companion. Both the bodies were greatly decomposed by the sea, but identified beyond a doubt. The seaman, Charles Vivian, was not found for nearly three weeks afterwards. His body was interred in the spot on which a wave had washed it, in the vicinity of Massa.

"After a variety of applications to the Lucchese and Tuscan Governments, and our Ambassador at Florence, I obtained, from the

kindness and exertions of Mr. Dawkins, an order to the officer commanding the tower of Migliarino, (near to which Lieutenant Williams had been cast, and buried in the sand,) that the body should be at my disposal. I likewise obtained an order to the same effect to the Commandant at Via Reggio, to deliver up the remains of Mr. Shelley, it having been decided by the friends of the parties that the bodies should be reduced to ashes by fire, as the readiest mode of conveying them to the places where the deceased would have wished to repose, as well as of removing all objections respecting the Quarantine Laws, which had been urged against their disinterment. Every thing being prepared for the requisite purposes, I embarked on board Lord Byron's schooner with my friend Captain Shenley, and sailed on the 13th of August. After a tedious passage of eleven hours, we anchored off Via Reggio, and fell in with two small vessels, which I had hired at Leghorn some days before for the purpose of ascertaining, by the means used to recover sunken vessels, the place in which my friend's

boat had foundered. They had on board the captain of a fishing-boat, who, having been overtaken in the same squall, had witnessed the sinking of the boat, without (as he says) the possibility of assisting her. After dragging the bottom, in the place which he indicated, for six days without finding her, I sent them back to Leghorn, and went on shore. The Major commanding the town, with the Captain of the port, accompanied me to the Governor. He received us very courteously, and did not object to the removal of our friend's remains, but to burning them, as the latter was not specified in the order. However, after some little explanation, he assented, and we gave the necessary directions for making every preparation to commence our painful undertaking next morning."

It was thought that the whole of these melancholy operations might have been performed in one day: but the calculation turned out to be erroneous. Mr. Williams's remains were commenced with. Mr. Trelawney and Captain Shenley were at the Tower by noon, with proper persons to assist, and were joined shortly

by Lord Byron and myself. A portable furnace and a tent had been prepared. "Wood," continues Mr. Trelawney, "we found in abundance on the beach, old trees and parts of wrecks. Within a few paces of the spot where the body lay, there was a rude-built shed of straw, forming a temporary shelter for soldiers at night, when performing the coast-patrole duty. The grave was at high-water mark, some eighteen paces from the surf, as it was then breaking, the distance about four miles and a half from Via Reggio. The magnificent bay of Spezia is on the right of this spot, Leghorn on the left, at equal distances of about twenty-two miles. The headlands, projecting boldly and far into the sea, form a deep and dangerous gulf, with a heavy swell and a strong current generally running right into it. A vessel embayed in this gulf, and overtaken by one of the squalls so common upon the coast of it, is almost certain to be wrecked. The loss of small craft is great; and the shallowness of the water, and breaking of the surf, preventing approach to the shore, or boats going out to assist, the loss of lives is in proportion. It was in the

centre of this bay, about four or five miles at sea, in fifteen or sixteen fathom water, with a light breeze under a crowd of sail, that the boat of our friends was suddenly taken clap aback by a sudden and very violent squall; and it is supposed that in attempting to bear up under such a press of canvass, all the sheets fast, the hands unprepared, and only three persons on board, the boat filled to leeward, and having two tons of ballast, and not being decked, went down on the instant; not giving them a moment to prepare themselves by even taking off their boots, or seizing an oar. Mr. Williams was the only one who could swim, and he but indifferently. The spot where Mr. Williams's body lay was well adapted for a man of his imaginative cast of mind, and I wished his remains to rest undisturbed; but it was willed otherwise. Before us was the sea, with islands; behind us the Apennines; beside us, a large tract of thick wood, stunted and twisted into fantastic shapes by the sea-breeze. The heat was intense, the sand being so scorched as to render standing on it painful."

Mr. Trelawney proceeds to describe the dis-

interment and burning of Mr. Williams's remains. Calumny, which never shows itself grosser than in its charges of want of refinement, did not spare even these melancholy ceremonies. The friends of the deceased, though they took no pains to publish the proceeding, were accused of wishing to make a sensation; of doing a horrible and unfeeling thing, &c. The truth was, that the nearest connexions, both of Mr. Shelley and Mr. Williams, wished to have their remains interred in regular places of burial; and that for this purpose they could be removed in no other manner. Such being the case, it is admitted that the mourners did not refuse themselves the little comfort of supposing, that lovers of books and antiquity, like Mr. Shelley and his friend, would not have been sorry to foresee this part of their fate. Among the materials for burning, as many of the gracefuller and more classical articles as could be procured—frankincense, wine, &c. were not forgotten.

The proceedings of the next day, with Mr. Shelley's remains, exactly resembled those of the foregoing, with the exception of there

being two assistants less. The inaccuracies of Captain Medwin on this subject I have noticed before. On both days, the extraordinary beauty of the flame arising from the funeral pile was noticed. The weather was beautifully fine. The Mediterranean, now soft and lucid, kissed the shore as if to make peace with it. The yellow sand and blue sky intensely contrasted with one another: marble mountains touched the air with coolness, and the flame of the fire bore away towards heaven in vigorous amplitude, waving and quivering with a brightness of inconceivable beauty. It seemed as though it contained the glassy essence of vitality. You might have expected a seraphic countenance to look out of it, turning once more, before it departed, to thank the friends that had done their duty.

Among the various conjectures respecting this lamentable event, a suspicion was not wanting, that the boat had been run down by a larger one, with a view to plunder it. Mr. Shelley was known to have taken money on board. Crimes of that nature had occurred often enough to warrant such a suspicion; and

they could be too soon washed out of the consciences of the ignorant perpetrators by confession. But it was lost in the more probable conclusions arising from the weather. One bitter consolation to the friends of Mr. Shelley was, that his death, as far as he alone was concerned, was of a nature he would have preferred to many others, probably to any. A reflection, more pleasing, reminded them, that in the rapid decomposition occasioned by the sea and the fire, the mortal part of him was saved from that gradual corruption, which is seldom contemplated without shuddering by a lively imagination. And yet the same imagination and suffering which make us cling to life at one time, and give us a horror of dissolution, can render the grave desirable and even beautiful at another. Mr. Shelley's remains were taken to Rome, and deposited in the Protestant burial-ground, near those of a child he had lost in that city, and of Mr. Keats. It is the cemetery he speaks of in the preface to his Elegy on the death of his young friend, as calculated to "make one in love with death, to think that one should be buried in

so sweet a place." A like tenderness of patience, in one who possessed a like energy, made Mr. Keats say on his death-bed, that he "seemed to feel the daisies growing over him." These are the feelings that servile critics ridicule, and that all other human beings respect. The generous reader will be glad to hear, that the remains of Mr. Shelley were attended to their final abode by some of the most respectable English residents in Rome. He was sure to awaken the sympathy of gallant and accomplished spirits wherever he went, alive or dead. The remains of Mr. Williams were taken to England. Mr. Williams was a very intelligent, good-hearted man, and his death was deplored by friends worthy of him.

The writer who criticised the "Posthumous Poems," in the "Edinburgh Review," does justice to the excellence of Mr. Shelley's intentions, and acknowledges him to be one of those rare persons called men of genius; but accuses him of a number of faults, which he attributes to the predominance of his will, and a scorn of every thing received and conventional. To this cause he traces the faults of his poetry,

and what he conceives to be the errors of his philosophy. Furthermore, he charges Mr. Shelley with a want of reverence for antiquity, and quotes a celebrated but not unequivocal passage from Bacon, where the Philosopher, according to the advice of the Prophet, recommends us to take our stand upon the ancient ways, and see what road we are to take for progression. He says Mr. Shelley had "too little sympathy with the feelings of others, which he thought he had a right to sacrifice, as well as his own, to a grand ethical experiment; and asserts that if a thing were old and established, this was with him a certain proof of its having no solid foundation to rest upon: if it was new, it was good and right: every paradox was to him a self-evident truth; every prejudice an undoubted absurdity. The weight of authority, the sanction of ages, the common consent of mankind, were vouchers only for ignorance, error, and imposture. Whatever shocked the feelings of others, conciliated his regard; whatever was light, extravagant, and vain, was to him a proportionable relief from the dulness and stupidity of established opi-

nions." This is caricature; and caricature of an imaginary original.

Alas! Mr. Shelley was so little relieved by what was light and vain, (if I understand what the Reviewer means by those epithets,) and so little disposed to quarrel with the common consent of mankind, where it seemed reasonably founded, that, at first, he could not endure even the comic parts of Lord Byron's writings, because he thought they tended to produce mere volatility instead of good; and he afterwards came to relish them, because he found an accord with them in the bosoms of society. Whatever shocked the feeling of others so little conciliated his regard, that with the sole exception of matters of religion (which is a point on which the most benevolent Reformers, authors of "grand ethical experiments," in all ages, have thought themselves warranted in hazarding alarm and astonishment,) his own feelings were never more violated than by disturbances given to delicacy, to sentiment, to the affections. If ever it seemed otherwise, as in the subject of his tragedy of the Cenci, it was only out of a more intense apprehensive-

ness, and the right it gave him to speak. He saw, in every species of tyranny and selfish will, an image of all the rest of the generation. That a love of paradox is occasionally of use to remind commonplaces of their weakness, and to prepare the way for liberal opinions, nobody knows better or has more unequivocally shown than Mr. Shelley's critic; and yet I am not aware that Mr. Shelley was at all addicted to paradox; or that he loved any contradiction, that did not directly contradict some great and tyrannical abuse. Prejudices that he thought innocent, no man was more inclined to respect, or even to fall in with. He was prejudiced in favour of the dead languages; he had a theoretical antipathy to innovations in style; he had almost an English dislike of the French and their literature, a philosopher or two excepted: it cost him much to reconcile himself to manners that were not refined; and even with regard to the prejudices of superstition, or the more poetical sides of popular faith, where they did not interfere with the daily and waking comforts of mankind, he was for admitting them with more than a spirit of toleration. It would be

hazardous to affirm that he did not believe in spirits and genii. This is not setting his face against "every received mystery, and all traditional faith." He set his face, not against a mystery nor a self-evident proposition, but against whatever he conceived to be injurious to human good, and whatever his teachers would have forced down his throat, in defiance of the inquiries they had suggested. His opposition to what was established, as I have said before, is always to be considered with reference to that feature in his disposition, and that fact in his history. Of antiquity and authority he was so little a scorner, that his opinions, novel as some of them may be thought, are all to be found in writers, both ancient and modern, and those not obscure ones or empirical, but men of the greatest, and wisest, and best names,—Plato and Epicurus, Montaigne, Bacon, Sir Thomas More. Nothing in him was his own, but the genius that impelled him to put philosophical speculations in the shape of poetry, and a subtle and magnificent style, abounding in Hellenisms, and by no means exempt (as he acknowledged) from a tendency

to imitate whatever else he thought beautiful, in ancient or modern writers.

But Mr. Shelley was certainly definite in his object: he thought it was high time for society to come to particulars: to know what they would have. With regard to marriage for instance, he was tired with the spectacle continually presented to his eyes, of a community always feeling sore upon that point, and cowed, like a man by his wife, from attempting some real improvement in it. There was no end, he thought, of setting up this new power, and pulling down that, if the one, to all real home purposes, proceeded just as the other did, and nothing was gained to society but a hope and a disappointment. This, in his opinion, was not the kind of will to be desired, in opposition to one with more definite objects. We must not, he thought, be eternally generalizing, shilly-shallying, and coqueting between public submission and private independence; but let a generous understanding and acknowledgment of what we are in want of, go hand in hand with our exertions in behalf of change; otherwise, when we arrive at success, we shall

find success itself in hands that are but physically triumphant—hands that hold up a victory on a globe, a splendid commonplace, as a new old thing for us to worship. This, to be sure, is standing *super vias antiquas;* but not in order to "make progression." The thing is all to be done over again. If there is "something rotten in the state of Denmark," let us mend it, and not set up Sweden or Norway, to knock down this rottenness with rottenness of their own; continually waiting for others to do our work, and finding them do it in such a manner, as to deliver us bound again into the hands of the old corruptions. We must be our own deliverers. An Essay on the Disinterestedness of Human Action is much; but twenty articles to show that the most disinterested person in the world is only a malcontent and a fanatic, can be of no service but to baffle conduct and resolution, in favour of eternal theory and the talking about it.

Mr. Shelley had no doubt a great deal of will; but the mistake of the Reviewer lies in giving it an antipathetical, instead of a sympathetic character. This may be the fault of

some reformers. It may also be a fault of others to lament the want of will in their brethren at one time, and the excess of it at another, but particularly the want; satirizing the sparing and fastidious conduct of the better part of the lovers of freedom, "the inconsistent, vacillating good," and bewailing the long misfortunes of the world, which a few energetic persons might put an end to by a resolute and unconditional exercise of their free agency. The writer in question is not exempt from these inconsistencies. I do not accuse him of want of sympathy. On the contrary, I think the antipathies which he has sometimes given way to so strangely, and the will which he at other times recommends, and at all times sets an example of, arise out of the impatience of his very sympathy with mankind. This it is, which together with his own extraordinary amount of talent, and the interesting evidences of it which continually appear, has for so long a time kept his friends in good blood with him, whatever mood he has happened to be in; though he has tried them, of late, pretty hard. But this it is

also which ought to have led him into a different judgment with regard to Mr. Shelley. A greater portion of will among reformers is desirable; but it does not follow that an occasional excess of it (if such) can or does do the mischief he supposes, or furnishes any excuse worth mention for the outcries and pretended arguments of the opposite party. If he will have a good deal of will, he must occasionally have an excess of it. The party in question, that is to say, all the bad systems and governments existing, with all their slaves and dependents, have an infinite will of their own, which they already make use of, with all their might, to put down every endeavour against it: and the world in general is so deafened with the noise of ordinary things, and the great working of the system which abuses it, that an occasional excess in the lifting up of a reforming voice appears to be necessary to make it listen. It requires the example of a spirit not so prostrate as its own, to make it believe that all hearts are not alike kept under, and that the hope of reformation is not every where given up. This is the

excuse for such productions as Werter, the Stranger, and other appeals to the first principles of sympathy and disinterestedness. This is the excuse for the paradoxes of Rousseau; for the extravagances of some of the Grecian philosophers (which were necessary to call the attention to all parts of a question); and if I did not wish to avoid hazarding misconception, and hurting the feelings, however unreasonably, of any respectable body of men, I might add stronger cases in point; cases, in which principles have been pushed to their greatest and most impracticable excess, for the purpose, we are told, of securing some attention to the reasonable part of them. Mr. Shelley objected to the present state of the intercourse of the sexes, and the vulgar notions of the Supreme Being. He also held with Sir Thomas More, that a community of property was desirable; an opinion, which obtained him more ill-will, perhaps, than any other, at least in the class among which he was born. The Reviewer implies, that he put forth some of these objections alarmingly or extravagantly. Be it so. The great point is to have a question discussed.

The advocates of existing systems of all sorts are strong enough to look to the defence; whereas, those who suffer by them are so much intimidated by their very sufferings, as to be afraid to move, lest they should be worse off than they are at present. They do not want to know their calamity; they know it well enough. They require to be roused, and not always to sit groaning over, or making despairing jests of their condition. If a friend's excess excites them to differ with him, they are still incited to look at the question. His sympathy moves them to be ashamed of their passiveness, and to consider what may be done. We need not fear, that it will be too much. At the very least, matters will find their level. If we are our own masters under Providence; if Nature works with us for tools, and intends amelioration through the means of our knowledge, we are roused to some purpose. If not, or if we are to go so far and no farther, no farther shall we go. The sweet or bitter waters of humanity will assuredly find where to settle.

The Reviewer, still acknowledging the genius of Mr. Shelley, and his benevolent inten-

tions, finds the same fault with his poetry as with his philosophy, and traces it to the same causes. Of all my friend's writings, the poetical parts are those which I should least conceive to subject him to the charge of want of sympathy. Is the quarrelling with constituted authorities and received calamities, the same thing as scorning the better part of what exists? Is the quitting the real world for the ideal in search of consolation, the same thing as thrusting one's foot against it in contempt, and flying off on the wings of antipathy? And what did Mr. Shelley carry thither when he went? A perpetual consciousness of his humanity; a clinging load of the miseries of his fellow-creatures. The *Witch of Atlas*, for example, is but a personification of the imaginative faculty in its most airy abstractions; and yet the author cannot indulge himself long in that fairy region, without *dreaming* of mortal strife. If he is not in this world, he must have visions of it. If fiction is his reality by day, reality will be his fiction during his slumbers. The truth is, Mr. Shelley was in his whole being, mental and physical, of an extreme delicacy and sensibili-

ty. He felt every part of his nature intensely; and his impulse, object, and use in this world, was to remind others of some important points touching our common nature and endeavours, by affording a more than ordinary example of their effect upon himself. It may be asked, who are to be reminded? how many? To which we answer, those who have been reminded already, as well as the select portion who remain to be so; never mind how few, provided they are reminded to some purpose. Mr. Shelley's writings, it is admitted, are not calculated to be popular, however popular in their ultimate tendency, or cordial in their origin. They are, for the most part, too abstract and refined. But " fit audience though few," is the motto of the noblest ambition; and it is these audiences that go and settle the world.

Mr. Shelley's poetry is invested with a dazzling and subtle radiance, which blinds the common observer with light. Piercing beyond this, we discover that the characteristics of his poetical writings are an exceeding sympathy with the whole universe, material and intellectual; an ardent desire to benefit his

species; an impatience of the tyrannies and superstitions that hold them bound; and a regret that the power of one loving and enthusiastic individual is not proportioned to his will, nor his good reception with the world at all proportioned to his love. His poetry is either made up of all these feelings united, or is an attempt to escape from their pressure into the widest fields of imagination. I say an attempt,—because, as we have seen, escape he does not; and it is curious to observe how he goes pouring forth his baffled affections upon every object he can think of, bringing out its beauties and pretensions by the light of a radiant fancy, and resolved to do the whole detail of the universe a sort of poetical justice, in default of being able to make his fellow-creatures attend to justice political. From this arises the fault of his poetry, which is a want of massiveness,—of a proper distribution of light and shade. The whole is too full of glittering points; of images touched and illustrated alike, and brought out into the same prominence. He ransacks every thing like a bee, grappling with it in the same

spirit of penetration and enjoyment, till you lose sight of the field he entered upon, in following him into his subtle recesses. He is also too fond, in his larger works, of repeating the same images drawn from the material universe and the sea. When he is obliged to give up these peculiarities, and to identify his feelings and experience with those of other people, as in his dramatic poems, the fault no longer exists. His object remains,—that of increasing the wisdom and happiness of mankind: but he has laid aside his wings, and added to the weight and purpose of his body; the spiritual part of him is invested with ordinary flesh and blood. In truth, for ordinary or immediate purposes, a great deal of Mr. Shelley's poetry ought to have been written in prose. It consists of philosophical speculations, which required an introduction to the understandings of the community, and not merely, as he thought, a recommendation to their good will. The less philosophic he becomes, reverting to his own social feelings, as in some of the pathetic complaints before us; or appealing to the common ones

of mankind upon matters immediately agitating them, as in the "Ode to Naples;" or giving himself fairly up to the sports of fancy, as in the "Witch of Atlas," or "The Translations from Goethe and Homer;" the more he delights and takes with him, those who did not know whether to argue, or to feel, in some of his larger works. The common reader is baffled with the perplexing mixture of passion and calmness; of the severest reasoning, and the wildest fiction; of the most startling appearances of dissent, and the most conventional calls upon sympathy. But in all his writings there is a wonderful sustained sensibility, and a language lofty and fit for it. He has the art of using the stateliest words and the most learned idioms, without incurring the charge of pedantry; so that passages of more splendid and sonorous writing are not to be selected from any writer, since the time of Milton: and yet when he descends from his ideal worlds, and comes home to us in our humbler bowers, and our yearnings after love and affection, he attunes the most natural feelings to a style so proportionate, and withal to a modulation so

truly musical, that there is nothing to surpass it in the lyrics of Beaumont and Fletcher.

Let the reader, whom these pages may have rendered more desirous of knowing Mr. Shelley, turn to the volume in question, and judge for himself in what sort of spirit it was that he wrote the "Witch of Atlas," the "Letter" to a Friend at p. 59, part of the "Ode to Naples," the "Song" at p. 141, a "Lament," the "Question," "Lines to an Indian Air," "Stanzas written in dejection near Naples," Lines on a "Faded Violet," "Lines to a Critic," "To-morrow," "Good Night," "Love's Philosophy," the "Stanzas" at p. 214, and the "Translations from Goethe and Homer." The verses "On the Medusa's Head of Leonardo da Vinci" are perhaps as fine as any thing in the book, for power. The poetry seems sculptured and grinning, like the subject. The words are cut with a knife. But love is the great inspirer of Mr. Shelley. His very abstract ideas are in love.

"The deep recesses of her odorous dwelling
Were stored with magic treasures—sounds of air,
Which had the power all spirits of compelling,
Folded in cells of crystal silence there;

Such as we hear in youth, and think the feeling
 Will never die—yet ere we are aware,
The feeling and the sound are fled and gone,
 And the regret they leave remains alone.
And there lay Visions swift, and sweet, and quaint,
 Each in its thin sheath like a chrysalis;
Some eager to burst forth, some weak and faint
With the soft burthen of intensest bliss."

We have heard of ladies falling in love with Lord Byron, upon the strength of Don Juan. These must be ladies in towns. If ever a more sequestered heroine could become enamoured of a poet out of the mere force of sentiment, or at least desire to give him exceeding comfort and consolation, it would be such a poet as Mr. Shelley. The most physical part of the passion acquires, from his treatment of it, a grace and purity inexpressible. It is curious to see with what fearlessness, in the conscious dignity of this power, he ventures to speak of things that would defy all mention from a less ingenuous lip. The "Witch of Atlas" will be liked by none but poets, or very poetical readers. Spenser would have liked it: Sir Kenelm Digby would have written a comment upon it. Its meanings are too remote, and its

imagery too wild, to be enjoyed by those who cannot put on wings of the most subtle conception, and remain in the uttermost parts of idealism. Even those who can, will think it something too dreamy and involved. They will discover the want of light and shade, which I have before noticed, and which leaves the picture without its due breadth and perspective. It is the fault of some of Mr. Shelley's poems, that they look rather like storehouses of imagery, than imagery put into proper action. We have the misty regions of wide air,

> "The hills of snow, and lofts of piled thunder—"

which Milton speaks of; but they are too much in their elementary state, as if just about to be used, and moving in their first chaos. To a friend, who pointed out to him this fault, Mr. Shelley said, that he would consider it attentively, and doubted not he should profit by the advice. He scorned advice as little as he did any other help to what was just and good. He could both give and take it with an exquisite mixture of frankness and delicacy, that formed one of the greatest evidences of

his superiority to common virtue. I have mentioned before, that his temper was admirable. He was naturally irritable and violent; but had so mastered the infirmity, as to consider every body's inclinations before his own. Mr. Trelawney pronounced him to be a man absolutely without selfishness. In his intercourse with myself, nothing delighted him more than to confound the limits of our respective property, in money-matters, books, apparel, &c. He would help himself without scruple to whatever he wanted, whether a book or a waistcoat; and was never better pleased, than at finding things of his own in his friend's possession.

The way in which Mr. Shelley's eye darted "from heaven to earth," and the sort of call at which his imagination was ever ready to descend, is well exemplified in the following passage of the *Letter* at p. 59. The unhappy mass of prostitution which exists in England, contrasted with something which seems to despise it, and which, in more opinions than his, is a main cause of it, was always one of the subjects that at a moment's notice would overshadow the liveliest of his moods. The pic-

turesque line in italics is beautifully true. The poet is writing to a friend in London.

"Unpavilioned heaven is fair,
Whether the moon, into her chamber gone,
Leaves midnight to the golden stars, or wan
Climbs with diminish'd beams the azure steep;
Or whether clouds sail o'er the inverse deep,
Piloted by the many-wandering blast,
And the rare stars rush through them, dim and fast.
All this is beautiful in every land.
But what see you beside? A shabby stand
Of hackney coaches—a brick house or wall,
Fencing some lonely court, white with the scrawl
Of our unhappy politics; or worse.
A wretched woman, reeling by, whose curse
Mix'd with the watchman's, partner of her trade,
You must accept in place of serenade."

These miserable women, sometimes indeed owing to the worst and most insensible qualities on their own parts, but sometimes also to the best and most guileless, are at such a dreadful disadvantage compared with those who are sleeping at such an hour in their comfortable homes, that it is difficult to pitch our imaginations among the latter, for a refuge from the thought of them. Real love, however, even if it be

unhappy, provided its sorrow be without contempt and sordidness, will furnish us with a transition less startling. The following *Lines to an Indian Air*, make an exquisite serenade.

"I arise from dreams of thee
In the first sweet sleep of night,
When the winds are breathing low,
And the stars are shining bright;
I arise from dreams of thee,
And a spirit in my feet
Has led me—who knows how?
To thy chamber-window, sweet!

"The wandering airs they faint
On the dark, the silent stream—
The champak odours fall,
Like sweet thoughts in a dream;
The nightingale's complaint
It dies upon her heart,
As I must upon thine,
Beloved as thou art!

"O lift me from the grass!
I die, I faint, I fail!
Let thy love in kisses rain
On my lips and eyelids pale.
My cheek is cold and white, alas!
My heart beats loud and fast;
Oh! press it close to thine again,
Where it will break at last."

I know not that two main parts of Mr. Shelley's poetical genius, the descriptive and the pathetic, ever vented themselves to more touching purpose than in the lines *Written in Dejection near Naples*. The brilliant yet soft picture with which they commence, introduces the melancholy observer of it in a manner extremely affecting. He beholds what delights others, and is willing to behold it, though it delights him not. He even apologizes for "insulting" the bright day he has painted so beautifully, with his "untimely moan." The stanzas exhibit, at once, minute observation, the widest power to generalize, exquisite power to enjoy, and admirable patience at the want of enjoyment. This latter combination forms the height of the amiable, as the former does of the intellectual character. The fourth stanza will strongly move the reader of this memoir.

"The sun is warm, the sky is clear,
The waves are dancing fast and bright,
Blue isles and snowy mountains wear
The purple moon's transparent light
† * * * * * *

† A line is wanting in the Edition.

Around its unexpanded buds;
Like many a voice of one delight,
The winds, the birds, the ocean floods,
The City's voice itself is soft, like Solitude's.

"I see the deep's untrampled floor
With green and purple sea-weeds strown;
I see the waves upon the shore,
Like light dissolved in star-showers, thrown.
I sit upon the sands alone;
The lightning of the noon-tide ocean
Is flashing round me, and a tone
Arises from its measured motion,
How sweet! did any heart now share in my emotion.

"Alas! I have nor hope, nor health,
Nor peace within, nor calm around,
Nor that content surpassing wealth,
The sage in meditation found,
And walk'd with inward glory crown'd;
Nor fame, nor power, nor love, nor leisure.
Others I see whom these surround;
Smiling they live, and call life pleasure;—
To me that cup has been dealt in another measure.

"Yet now despair itself is mild,
Ev'n as the winds and waters are;
I could lie down like a tired child,
And weep away the life of care
Which I have borne and yet must bear,
Till death, like sleep, might steal on me,

And I might feel in the warm air
My cheek grow cold, and hear the sea
Breathe o'er my dying brain its last monotony.

"Some might lament that I were cold,
As I when this sweet day is done,
Which my lost heart, too soon grown old,
Insults with this untimely moan:
They might lament, for I am one
Whom men love not, and yet regret;
Unlike this day, which, when the sun
Shall on its stainless glory set,
Will linger, though enjoy'd, like joy in memory yet."

The pieces, that call to mind Beaumont and Fletcher, are such as the following:—

"Music, when soft voices die,
Vibrates in the memory;
Odours, when sweet violets sicken,
Live within the sense they quicken.

"Rose-leaves, when the rose is dead,
Are heap'd for the beloved's bed;
And so thy thoughts, when thou art gone,
Love itself shall slumber on."

"*Love's Philosophy*" is another. It has been often printed; but for the same reason will bear repetition. The sentiment must be un-

derstood with reference to the delicacy as well as freedom of Mr. Shelley's opinions, and not as supplying any excuse to that heartless libertinism which no man disdained more. The poem is here quoted for its grace and lyrical sweetness.

"'The fountains mingle with the river,
And the river with the ocean;
The winds of heaven mix for ever,
With a sweet emotion:
Nothing in the world is single;
All things, by a law divine,
In one another's being mingle—
Why not I with thine?

"See the mountains kiss high heaven,
And the waves clasp one another;
No sister flower would be forgiven,
If it disdain'd its brother:
And the sunlight clasps the earth,
And the moonbeams kiss the sea;
What are all these kissings worth,
If thou kiss not me?"

Mr. Shelley ought to have written nothing but dramas, interspersed with such lyrics as these. Perhaps had he lived, he would have done so; for, after all, he was but young; and

he had friends of that opinion, whom he was much inclined to agree with. The fragment of the tragedy of *Charles the First*, in this volume, makes us long for more of it. With all his republicanism, he would have done justice to Charles, as well as to Pym and Hampden. His completest production is unquestionably the tragedy of the "Cenci." The objections to the subject are, on the face of them, not altogether unfounded; but they ought not to weigh with those who have no scruple in grappling with any of the subjects of our old English drama; still less, if they are true readers of that drama, and know how to think of the great ends of poetry in a liberal and masculine manner. "Cenci" is the personification of a will, maddened, like a Roman emperor's, by the possession of impunity; deadened to all sense of right and wrong by degrading notions of a Supreme Being; and consequently subjected to the most frightful wants, and knowing no pleasure but in sensuality or malignity. The least of his actions becomes villainous, because he does it in defiance of principle. On the other hand,

his death by the hand of his outraged daughter produces a different meeting of extremes, because it results, however madly, from horror at the violation of principle. The reader refuses to think that a daughter has slain a *father*, precisely because a dreadful sense of what a father ought not to have done has driven her to it, and because he sees that in any other situation she would be the most exemplary of children. This remark is made for the benefit of the curious reader, and to vindicate Mr. Shelley from having taken up a subject out of pure scorn of his feelings: a strange policy in any author, and not surely to be found in him. Considering what an excellent production the *Cenci* is, it is certainly difficult to help wishing that the subject had been of a nature to startle nobody; but it may be as truly added, that such a subject could have been handled by no other writer in a manner less offensive, or more able to suggest its own vindication.

The Translations that conclude the "Posthumous Poems," are masterly. That of the "Hymn to Mercury," containing the pranks

of the Deity when young, abounds in singular animal spirits, a careless yet exuberant feeling of mixed power and indifference, of the zest of new-born life, and a godlike superiority to its human manifestations of it, such as we might suppose to take place before vice and virtue were thought of, or only thought of to afford pastime for mischievous young gods, who were above the necessity of behaving themselves. I will confine myself, however, to the quotation of a passage or two from the scenes out of Goethe's "Faust." They contain the *Prologue in Heaven*, which Lord Leveson Gower has omitted in his translation, and the *May-day Night*, which he has abridged, and thought untranslatable. The *Prologue in Heaven* is remarkable for the liberties which a privy-counsellor and gentleman with a star at his breast (for such the original poet is) may take with the scriptural idea of the Divinity, and yet find readers to eulogize and translate him. It is a parody on the beginning of the Book of Job. Not that I believe the illustrious German intended any disrespect to loftier conceptions of a Deity. The

magnificent Hymn that precedes it, shows he can do justice to the noblest images of creation, and improve what other poets have repeated to us of the songs of angels. Mr. Shelley's opinion of the Book of Job (on which he thought of founding a tragedy) was not the less exalted, (nor, I dare say, Goethe's either,) because he could allow himself to make this light and significant comment on the exordium. But it is worth while noticing these sort of discrepancies; and to observe also, how readily they shall be supposed without being comprehended for the sake of one man, and how little comprehended or supposed either for the toleration of another.

SCENE—THE HARTZ MOUNTAIN, A DESOLATE COUNTRY.

Faust, Mephistophiles.

Meph. Would you not like a broomstick? As for me,
I wish I had a good stout ram to ride;
For we are still far from th' appointed place.
Faust. This knotted staff is help enough for me,
Whilst I feel fresh upon my legs. What good
Is there in making short a pleasant way?
To creep along the labyrinths of the vales,
And climb those rocks, where ever-babbling springs
Precipitate themselves in waterfalls,

Is the true sport that seasons such a path.
Already Spring kindles the birchen spray,
And the hoar pines already feel her breath:
Shall she not work also within our limbs?

Meph. Nothing of such an influence do I feel.
My body is all wintry, and I wish
The flowers upon our path were frost and snow.
But see; how Melancholy rises now
Dimly uplifting her belated beam,
The blank unwelcome round of the red moon,
And gives so bad a light, that every step
One stumbles 'gainst some crag. With your permission,
I'll call an Ignis-Fatuus to our aid;
I see one yonder burning jollily.
Halloo, my friend! may I request that you
Would favour us with your bright company?
Why should you blaze away there to no purpose?
Pray, be so good as light us up this way.

Ignis-Fatuus. With reverence be it spoken, I will try
To overcome the lightness of my nature:
Our course, you know, is generally zig-zag.

Meph. Ha! ha! your worship thinks you have to deal
With men. Go straight on, in the Devil's name,
Or I shall puff your flickering light out.

Ignis-Fatuus. Well,
I see you are the master of the house;
I will accommodate myself to you.
Only consider, that to-night this mountain
Is all enchanted, and if Jack-a-lanthorn
Shows you his way, though you should miss your own,
You ought not to be too exact with him.

Faust, Mephistophiles, and Ignis-Fatuus, in alternate chorus.

The limits of the sphere of dream,
 The bounds of true and false, are past.
Lead us on, thou wandering Gleam,
 Lead us onward, far and fast,
 To the wide, the desert waste.

But see how swift advance and shift
 Trees behind trees, row by row,—
How, clift by clift, rocks bend and lift
 Their frowning foreheads as we go.
 The giant-snouted crags, ho! ho!
 How they snort, and how they blow!

Through the mossy sods and stones,
 Stream and streamlet hurry down;
A rushing throng! A sound of song
 Beneath the vault of heaven is blown!

A profound living critic (I forget his name) has discovered, that the couplet in italics is absurd—crags having no snouts properly so called, and being things by no means alive or blowing! The plot now thickens. Every thing is vivified like the rocks; every thing takes a devilish aspect and meaning; the winds rise; the stragglers of the Devil's festival begin to appear, and the travellers feel themselves in the "witch element."

Faust. How
The children of the wind *rage* in the air!
With what fierce strokes they fall upon my neck

* * * * *

Meph. Dost thou not hear?
Strange accents are ringing
Aloft, afar, anear,
The witches are singing!
The torrent of the raging wizard song
Streams the whole mountain along.

Chorus of Witches.

The stubble is yellow, the corn is green,
Now to the Brocken the witches go;
The mighty multitude here may be seen
Gathering, wizard and witch, below.
Sir Urean is sitting aloft in the air;
Hey over stock, and hey over stone!
'Twixt witches and incubi what shall be done?
Tell it who dare! tell it who dare!

A Voice. Upon a sow-swine, whose farrows were nine,
Old Baubo rideth alone.

Chorus. Honour her to whom honour is due,
Old Mother Baubo! honour to you!
An able sow, with old Baubo upon her,
Is worthy of glory, and worthy of honour!
The legion of witches is coming behind,
Darkening the night, and outspeeding the wind.

A Voice. Which way comest thou?

A Voice. Over Ilsenstein;
The owl was awake in the white moonshine;

I saw her at rest in her downy nest,
And she stared at me with her broad, bright eye.
Voices. And you may now as well take your course on to Hell,
Since you ride by so fast, on the headlong blast.
A Voice. She dropped poison upon me, as I past.
Here are the wounds.
Chorus of Witches. Come away! come along!
The way is wide, the way is long!
But what is that for a Bedlam throng?
Stick with the prong, and scratch with the broom.
The child in the cradle lies strangled at home,
And the mother is clapping her hands.
Semi-chorus of Wizards.—1st.—We glide in
Like snails when the women are all away.
From a house once given over to sin,
Woman has a thousand steps to stray.
Semi-chorus—2nd.—A thousand steps must a woman take,
Where a man but a single step will make.
Voices above. Come with us, come with us, from Felsensee!*
Voices below. With what joy would we fly through the upper sky!
We are washed, we are 'nointed, stark-naked are we:
But our toil and our pain are for ever in vain.

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* A gentleman, who reads German, informs me, that there must either be a mistake of the transcriber here, or that Mr. Shelley for the moment had left untranslated the concluding word of the line; which is not a proper name, but means a *sea of rocks*—the Felsen-see.

Both Choruses. The wind is still, the stars are fled,
The melancholy moon is dead;
The magic notes, like spark on spark,
Drizzle, whistling through the dark,
Come away!

Voices below. Stay, oh, stay!

Voices above. Out of the crannies of the rocks,
Who calls?

Voice below. Oh let me join your flocks!
I three hundred years have striven
To catch your skirt, and mount to heaven,
And still in vain. Oh, might I be
In company akin with me!

Both choruses. Some on a ram, and some on a prong,
On poles and on broomsticks we flutter along;
Forlorn is the wight, who can rise not to-night.

A Half-Witch below. I have been tripping this many an hour;
Are the others already so far before?
No quiet at home, and no peace abroad!
And less methinks is found by the road.

Chorus of Witches. Come onward, away! aroint thee, aroint!
A witch to be strong must anoint, anoint—
Then every trough will be boat enough;
With a rag for a sail, he can sweep through the sky,—
Who flies not to-night, when means he to fly?

Both choruses. We cling to the skirt, and we strike on the ground;
Witch legions thicken around and around;
Wizard swarms cover the heath all over.

(*They descend.*)

Meph. What thronging, dashing, raging, rustling;
What whispering, babbling, hissing, bustling
What glimmering, spurting, stinking, burning;
As heaven and earth were overturning.
There is a true witch element about us;
Take hold on me, or we shall be divided:—
Where are you?

Faust. (*from a distance.*) Here!

Meph. What!
I must exert my authority in the house.
Place for young Voland! pray make way, good people.
Take hold on me, Doctor, and with one step
Let us escape from this unpleasant crowd:
They are too mad for people of my sort.
Just there shines a peculiar kind of light—
Something attracts me in those bush . Come
This way: we shall slip down there in a minute.

Faust. Spirit of Contradiction! Well, lead on—
'Twere a wise feat, indeed, to wander out
Into the Brocken upon May-day night,
And then to isolate oneself in scorn,
Disgusted with the humours of the time.

Meph. See yonder, round a many-coloured flame,
A merry club is huddled all together:
Even with such little people as sit there,
One would not be alone.

Faust. Would that I were
Up yonder in the glow and whirling smoke,
Where the blind million rush impetuously
To meet the evil ones! there might I solve
Many a riddle that torments me.

Meph. Yet
Many a riddle there is tied anew
Inextricably. Let the great world rage!
We will stay here, safe in the quiet dwellings.
It 's an old custom. Men have ever built
Their own small world in the great world of all.

Observe, here, how the author ridicules alike useless inquiries and a selfish passiveness. The great business of life is to be social and beneficent. The witches and their May-game are selfish and vulgar passions of all sorts, hardened into malignity, and believing only in the pleasures of the will. Their turmoil is in vain. Their highest and most superstitious reach to heaven recoils only into disappointment, and a sense of hell. But the author proceeds to have a gird also at dry, mechanical theorists, unalive to sentiment and fancy. No sophistication escapes him. Take a passage or two, eminently infernal.

Meph. (*to Faust, who has seceded from the dance.*)
Why did you let that fair girl pass by you,
Who sung so sweetly to you in the dance?
Faust. A red mouse, in the middle of her singing,
Sprung from her mouth.

Meph. That was all right, my friend;
Be it enough that the mouse was not grey.
Do not disturb your hour of happiness
With close consideration of such trifles.

This is an image of bad and disgusting passions detected in one whom we love, and in the very midst and heart of our passion!—The following may be interpreted to shadow forth either the consequences of seduction, or the miserable regret with which a man of the world calls to mind his first love, and his belief in goodness.

Faust. Then saw I—
Meph. What?
Faust. Seest thou not a pale,
Fair girl standing alone, far, far away?
She drags herself now forward with slow steps,
And seems as if she moved with shackled feet:
I cannot overcome the thought that she
Is like poor Margaret.
Meph. Let it be—pass on—
No good can come of it—it is not well
To meet it—it is an enchanted phantom,
A lifeless idol: with its numbing look
It freezes up the blood of man; and they
Who meet its ghastly stare are turned to stone,
Like those who saw Medusa.

Faust. Oh too true!
Her eyes are like the eyes of a fresh corpse
Which no beloved hand has closed, alas!
That is the heart which Margaret yielded to me—
Those are the lovely limbs which I enjoy'd!
Meph. It is all magic! poor deluded fool!
She looks to every one like his first love.
Faust. Oh what delight! what woe! I cannot turn
My looks from her sweet piteous countenance.
How strangely does a single blood-red line,
Not broader than the sharp edge of a knife,
Adorn her lovely neck!
Meph. Ay, she can carry
Her head under her arm, upon occasion;
Perseus has cut it off for her. These pleasures
End in delusion.

So do not end the pleasures given us by men of genius with great and beneficent views. So does not end the pleasure of endeavouring to do justice to their memories, however painful the necessity. Some good must be done them, however small. Some pleasure cannot but be realized, for a great principle is advocated, and a deep gratitude felt. I differed with Mr. Shelley on one or two important points; but I agreed with him heartily on the most important point of all,—the necessity of doing

good, *and of discussing the means of it freely.* I do not think the world so unhappy as he did, or what a very different and much more contented personage has not hesitated to pronounce it,—a "vale of blood and tears." But I think it quite unhappy enough to require that we should all set our shoulders to the task of reformation; and this for two reasons: first, that if mankind can effect any thing, they can only effect it by trying, instead of lamenting and being selfish; and second, that if no other good come of our endeavours, we must always be the better for what keeps human nature in hope and activity. That there are monstrous evils to be got rid of, nobody doubts: that we never scruple to get rid of any minor evil that annoys us, any obstacle in our way, or petty want of comfort in our dwellings, we know as certainly. Why the larger ones should be left standing, is yet to be understood. Sir Walter Scott may have no objection to his "vale of blood and tears," provided he can look down upon it from a decent aristocratical height, and a well-stocked mansion; but others have an inconvenient habit of levelling themselves with

humanity, and feeling for their neighbours: and it is lucky for Sir Walter himself, that they have so; or Great Britain would not enjoy the comfort she does in her northern atmosphere. The conventional are but the weakest and most thankless children of the unconventional. They live upon the security the others have obtained for them. If it were not for the reformers and innovators of old, the Hampdens, the Miltons, and the Sydneys, life in this country, with all its cares, would not be the convenient thing it is, even for the lowest retainers of the lowest establishment. A feeling of indignation will arise, when we think of great spirits like those, contrasted with the mean ones that venture to scorn their wisdom and self-sacrifice; but it is swallowed up in what absorbed the like emotions in their own minds,—a sense of the many. The mean spirit, if we knew all, need not be denied even his laugh. He may be too much in want of it. But the greatest unhappiness of the noble-minded has moments of exquisite relief. Every thing of beautiful and good that exists, has a kind face for him when he turns to it; or reflects the

happy faces of others that enjoy it, if he cannot. He can extract consolation out of discomfiture itself,—if the good he sought otherwise, can come by it. Mr. Shelley felt the contumelies he underwent, with great sensibility; and he expressed himself accordingly; but I know enough of his nature to be certain, that he would gladly have laid down his life to ensure a good to society, even out of the most lasting misrepresentations of his benevolence. Great is the pleasure to me to anticipate the day of justice, by putting an end to this evil. The friends whom he loved may now bid his brave and gentle spirit repose; for the human beings whom he laboured for, *begin to know him.*

LETTERS FROM MR. SHELLEY

TO

MR. LEIGH HUNT.

[I REGRET extremely, on the reader's account, as well as my own, that I have not taken better and more grateful care of the letters which my friend wrote to me. I know not how they were lost. I thought I had preserved them better. What I can lay before the public, I do.]

LETTER I.

Lyons, March 22, 1818.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

Why did you not wake me that night before we left England, you and Marianne? I take this as rather an unkind piece of kindness in

you; but which, in consideration of the six hundred miles between us, I forgive.

We have journeyed towards the spring that has been hastening to meet us from the south; and though our weather was at first abominable, we have now warm sunny days, and soft winds, and a sky of deep azure, the most serene I ever saw. The heat in this city to-day, is like that of London in the midst of summer. My spirits and health sympathize in the change. Indeed, before I left London, my spirits were as feeble as my health, and I had demands upon them which I found difficult to supply. I have read Foliage:—with most of the poems I was already familiar. What a delightful poem the "Nymphs" is! especially the second part. It is truly *poetical*, in the intense and emphatic sense of the word.* If six hundred miles were not between us, I should

* The reader will pardon my retention of these passages, for the sake of him who wrote them. The poem here mentioned did not deserve what Mr. Shelley said of it. I had not been careful enough in writing it,—had not brooded sufficiently over my thoughts to concentrate them into proper imagination; perhaps was unable to do so. But the subject lay in those sequestered paths of beauty and mythology, which Mr. Shelley was fond of.

say what pity that *glib* was not omitted, and that the poem is not as faultless as it is beautiful. But for fear I should *spoil* your next poem, I will not let slip a word on the subject. Give my love to Marianne and her sister, and tell Marianne she defrauded me of a kiss by not waking me when she went away, and that as I have no better mode of conveying it, I must take the best, and ask you to pay the debt. When shall I see you all again? Oh that it might be in Italy! I confess that the thought of how long we may be divided, makes me very melancholy. Adieu, my dear friends. Write soon.

Ever most affectionately your's

P. B. S.

LETTER II.

Livorno, August 15, 1819.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

How good of you to write to us so often, and such kind letters! But it is like lending to a beggar. What can I offer in return?*

* Such is the way in which the most generous of men used to talk to those whom he had obliged.

Though surrounded by suffering and disquietude, and latterly almost overcome by our strange misfortune,* I have not been idle. My Prometheus is finished, and I am also on the eve of completing another work, totally different from any thing you might conjecture that I should write, of a more popular kind; and, if any thing of mine could deserve attention, of higher claims. "Be innocent of the knowledge, dearest chuck, till thou approve the performance."

I send you a little poem to give to Ollier for publication, but *without my name:* Peacock will correct the proofs. I wrote it with the idea of offering it to the Examiner, but I find it is too long.† It was composed last year at Este: two of the characters you will recognize; the third is also in some degree a painting from nature, but, with respect to time and place, ideal. You will find the little piece, I think, in some degree consistent with

* The taking away of his children by the Court of Chancery.

† "Julian and Maddalo," printed in the Posthumous Poems. Maddalo is Lord Byron; Julian himself.

your own ideas of the manner in which poetry ought to be written. I have employed a certain familiar style of language to express the actual way in which people talk with each other, whom education and a certain refinement of sentiment have placed above the use of vulgar idioms. I use the word *vulgar* in its most extensive sense: the vulgarity of rank and fashion is as gross in its way, as that of poverty, and its cant terms equally expressive of base conceptions, and therefore equally unfit for poetry. Not that the familiar style is to be admitted in the treatment of a subject wholly ideal, or in that part of any subject which relates to common life, where the passion, exceeding a certain limit, touches the boundaries of that which is ideal. Strong passion expresses itself in metaphor, borrowed from objects alike remote or near, *and casts over all the shadow of its own greatness.** But what am I about? if my grandmother sucks eggs, was it I who taught her?

* Let me admire with the reader (I do not pretend to be under the necessity of calling his attention to it) this most noble image.

If *you* would really correct the proof, I need not trouble Peacock, who, I suppose, has enough. Can you take it as a compliment that I prefer to trouble you?

I do not particularly wish this poem to be known as mine, but, at all events, I would not put my name to it. I leave you to judge whether it is best to throw it in the fire, or to publish it. So much for self—*self*, that burr that will stick to one. Your kind expressions about my Eclogue † gave me great pleasure; indeed, my great stimulus in writing is to have the approbation of those who feel kindly towards me. The rest is mere duty. I am also delighted to hear that you think of us, and form fancies about us. We cannot yet come home.

* * * * *

Most affectionately yours,

P. B. Shelley.

† "Rosalind and Helen."

LETTER III.

Livorno, September 3d, 1819.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

At length has arrived Ollier's parcel, and with it the portrait. What a delightful present! It is almost yourself, and we sate talking with it, and of it, all the evening. . . . . It is a great pleasure to us to possess it, a pleasure in a time of need; coming to us when there are few others. How we wish it were you, and not your picture! How I wish we were with you!

This parcel, you know, and all its letters, are now a year old; some older. There are all kinds of dates, from March to August, 1818, and "your date," to use Shakspeare's expression, "is better in a pie or a pudding, than in your letter." "Virginity," Parolles says,—but letters are the same thing in another shape.

With it came, too, Lamb's works. I have looked at none of the other books yet. What a lovely thing is his "Rosamond Gray!" how much knowledge of the sweetest and deepest part of our nature in it! When I think of

such a mind as Lamb's,—when I see how unnoticed remain things of such exquisite and complete perfection, what should I hope for myself, if I had not higher objects in view than fame?

I have seen too little of Italy and of pictures. Perhaps Peacock has shown you some of my letters to him. But at Rome I was very ill, seldom able to go out without a carriage; and though I kept horses for two months there, yet there is so much to see! Perhaps I attended more to sculpture than painting,—its forms being more easily intelligible than those of the latter. Yet I saw the famous works of Raphael, whom I agree with the whole world in thinking the finest painter. Why, I can tell you another time. With respect to Michael Angelo, I dissent, and think with astonishment and indignation on the common notion that he equals, and in some respect exceeds Raphael. He seems to me to have no sense of moral dignity and loveliness; and the energy for which he has been so much praised, appears to me to be a certain rude, external, mechanical quality, in comparison

with any thing possessed by Raphael; or even much inferior artists. His famous painting in the Sixtine Chapel, seems to me deficient in beauty and majesty, both in the conception and the execution. He has been called the Dante of painting; but if we find some of the gross and strong outlines, which are employed in the few most distasteful passages of the Inferno, where shall we find *your* Francesca,—where, the spirit coming over the sea in a boat, like Mars rising from the vapours of the horizon,—where, Matilda gathering flowers, and all the exquisite tenderness, and sensibility, and ideal beauty, in which Dante excelled all poets except Shakspeare?

As to Michael Angelo's *Moses*—but you have seen a cast of that in England.——I write these things, Heaven knows why!

I have written something and finished it, different from any thing else, and a new attempt for me; and I mean to dedicate it to you.* I should not have done so without your approbation, but I asked your picture

* "The Cenci."

last night, and it smiled assent. If I did not think it in some degree worthy of you, I would not make you a public offering of it. I expect to have to write to you soon about it. If Ollier is not turned Christian, Jew, or become infected with *the Murrain*, he will publish it. Don't let him be frightened, for it is nothing which by any courtesy of language can be termed either moral or immoral.

Mary has written to Marianne for a parcel, in which I beg you will make Ollier enclose what you know would most interest me,—your "Calendar," (a sweet extract from which I saw in the Examiner,) and the other poems belonging to you; and, for some friends of mine, my Eclogue. This parcel, which must be sent instantly, will reach me by October; but don't trust letters to it, except just a line or so. When you write, write by the post.

Ever your affectionate,

P. B. S.

My love to Marianne and Bessy, and Thornton too, and Percy, &c., and if you could ima-

gine any way in which I could be useful to them here, tell me. I will inquire about the Italian chalk. You have no idea of the pleasure this portrait gives us.

LETTER IV.

Livorno, Sept. 27th, 1819.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

We are now on the point of leaving this place for Florence, where we have taken pleasant apartments for six months, which brings us to the 1st of April; the season at which new flowers and new thoughts spring forth upon the earth and in the mind. What is then our destination is yet undecided. I have not yet seen Florence, except as one sees the outside of the streets; but its physiognomy indicates it to be a city, which, though the ghost of a republic, yet possesses most amiable qualities. I wish you could meet us there in the spring, and we would try to muster up a "lieta brigata," which, leaving behind them the pestilence of remembered misfortunes, might act over again the pleasures of the interlocutors in

Boccaccio. I have been lately reading this most divine writer. He is in the high sense of the word a poet, and his language has the rythm and harmony of verse. I think him not equal certainly either to Dante or Petrarch, but far superior to Tasso and Ariosto, the children of a later and of a colder day. I consider the three first as the productions of the vigour of the infancy of a new nation, as rivulets from the same spring as that which fed the greatness of the Republics of Florence and Pisa, and which checked the influence of the German emperors, and from which, through obscurer channels, Raphael and Michael Angelo drew the light and the harmony of their inspiration. When the second-rate poets of Italy wrote, the corrupting blight of tyranny was already hanging on every bud of genius. Energy and simplicity and unity of idea were no more. In vain do we seek, in the fine passages of Ariosto or Tasso, any expression which at all approaches, in this respect, to those of Dante and Petrarch. How much do I admire Boccaccio! What descriptions of nature are there in his little introductions to every new

day! It is the morning of life, stripped of that mist of familiarity which makes it obscure to us. Boccaccio seems to me to have possessed a deep sense of the fair ideal of human life, considered in its social relations. His more serious theories of love agree especially with mine. He often expresses things lightly too, which have serious meanings of a very beautiful kind. He is a moral casuist, the opposite of the ready-made and worldly system of morals.

* * * * *

It would give me much pleasure to know Mr. Lloyd. When I was in Cumberland, I got Southey to borrow a copy of "Berkeley" from him, and I remember observing some pencil notes in it, probably written by Lloyd, which I thought particularly acute.

Most affectionately your friend,

P. B. S.

LETTER V.

Firenze, Dec. 2, 1819.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

Yesterday morning Mary brought me a little boy. She suffered but two hours' pain, and is now so well that it seems a wonder that she stays in bed. The babe is also quite well, and has begun to suck. You may imagine this is a great relief and a great comfort to me, amongst all my misfortunes, past, present, and to come.

Since I last wrote to you, some circumstances have occurred, not necessary to explain by letter, which make my pecuniary condition a very difficult one. The physicians absolutely forbid my travelling to England in the winter, but I shall probably pay you a visit in the spring. With what pleasure, among all the other sources of regret and discomfort with which England abounds for me, do I *think* of looking on the original of that kind and earnest face which is now opposite Mary's bed! It will be the only thing which Mary will envy me, or will need to envy me, in that journey; for I shall come alone. Shaking

hands with you is worth all the trouble; the rest is clear loss.

I will tell you more about myself and my pursuits, in my next letter.

Kind love to Marianne, Bessy, and all the children. Poor Mary begins (for the first time) to look a little consoled. For we have spent, as you may imagine, a miserable five months.

Good bye, my dear Hunt,

Your affectionate Friend,

P. B. S.

I have had no letter from you for *a month*.

LETTER VI.

Florence, Dec. 23, 1819.

MY DEAR HUNT,

Why don't you write to us? I was preparing to send you something for your "Indicator," but I have been a drone instead of a bee in this business, thinking that perhaps, as you did not acknowledge any of my late enclosures, it would not be welcome to you, whatever I might send.

What a state England is in! But you will never write politics. I don't wonder;—but I wish, then, that you would write a paper in "The Examiner," on the actual state of the country, and what, under all the circumstances of the conflicting passions and interests of men, we are to expect. Not what we ought to expect, or what, if so and so were to happen, we might expect,—but what, as things are, there is reason to believe will come;—and send it me for my information. Every word a man has to say is valuable to the public now; and thus you will at once gratify your friend, nay, instruct, and either exhilarate him or force him to be resigned,—and awaken the minds of the people.

I have no spirits to write what I do not know whether you will care much about: I know well, that if I were in great misery, poverty, &c., you would think of nothing else but how to amuse and relieve me. You omit me if I am prosperous.

* * * *

I could laugh if I found a joke, in order to put you in good-humour with me after my

scolding;—in good-humour enough to write to us. * * * * * * Affectionate love to and from all. This ought not only to be the *Vale* of a letter, but a superscription over the gate of life.

Your since Friend,

P. B. SHELLEY.

I send you a *sonnet*. I don't expect you to publish it, but you may show it to whom you please.

LETTER VII.

December, 1819.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

Two letters, both bearing date Oct. 20, arrive on the same day:—one is always glad of twins.

We hear of a box arrived at Genoa with books and clothes; it must be yours. Meanwhile the babe is wrapped in flannel petticoats, and we get on with him as we can. He is small, healthy, and pretty. Mary is recovering rapidly. Marianne, I hope, is quite recovered.

You do not tell me whether you have re-

ceived my lines on the Manchester affair. They are of the exotic species, and are meant, not for "The Indicator," but "The Examiner." I would send for the former, if you like, some letters on such subjects of art as suggest themselves in Italy. Perhaps I will, at a venture, send you a specimen of what I mean next post. I enclose you in this a piece for "The Examiner;" or let it share the fate, whatever that fate may be, of the "Mask of Anarchy."

I am sorry to hear that you have employed yourself in translating "Aminta," though I doubt not it will be a just and beautiful translation. You ought to write Amintas. You ought to exercise your fancy in the perpetual creation of new forms of gentleness and beauty.

* * * * * * *

With respect to translation, even *I* will not be seduced by it; although the Greek plays, and some of the ideal dramas of Calderon, (with which I have lately, and with inexpressible wonder and delight, become acquainted,) are perpetually tempting me to throw over their perfect and glowing forms the grey veil of my own words. And you know me too well to

suspect, that I refrain from the belief that what I would substitute for them would deserve the regret which yours would, if suppressed. I have confidence in my moral sense alone; but that is a kind of originality. I have only translated the Cyclops of Euripides when I could absolutely do nothing else, and the Symposium of Plato, which is the delight and astonishment of all who read it:—I mean, the original, or so much of the original as is seen in my translation, not the translation itself.

* * * * *

I think I have an accession of strength since my residence in Italy, though the disease itself in the side, whatever it may be, is not subdued. Some day we shall all return from Italy. I fear that in England things will be carried violently by the rulers, and that they will not have learned to yield in time to the spirit of the age. The great thing to do is to hold the balance between popular impatience and tyrannical obstinacy; to inculcate with fervour both the right of resistance and the duty of forbearance. You know, my principles incite me to take all the good I can get in politics, for ever aspiring

to something more. I am one of those whom nothing will fully satisfy, but who am ready to be partially satisfied by all that is practicable. We shall see.†

Give Bessy a thousand thanks from me for writing out in that pretty neat hand your kind and powerful defence. Ask what she would like best from Italian land. We mean to bring you all something; and Mary and I have been wondering what it shall be. Do you, each of you, choose.

* * * * * * *

Adieu, my dear friend,

Your's affectionately ever,

P. B. S.

LETTER VIII.

Pisa, August 26th, 1821.

MY DEAREST FRIEND,

Since I last wrote to you, I have been on a visit to Lord Byron at Ravenna. The result

† Mr. Shelley would have been pleased to see the change that took place under the administration of Mr. Canning,—a change, which is here described by anticipation.

of this visit was a determination on his part to come and live at Pisa, and I have taken the finest palace on the Lung' Arno for him. But the material part of my visit consists in a message which he desires me to give you, and which I think ought to add to your determination—for such a one I hope you have formed—of restoring your shattered health and spirits by a migration to these "regions mild of calm and serene air."

He proposes that you should come and go shares with him and me, in a periodical work, to be conducted here; in which each of the contracting parties should publish all their original compositions, and share the profits. He proposed it to Moore, but for some reason it was never brought to bear. There can be no doubt that the *profits* of any scheme in which you and Lord Byron engage, must, from various yet co-operating reasons, be very great. As to myself, I am, for the present, only a sort of link between you and him, until you can know each other and effectuate the arrangement; since (to entrust you with a secret which, for your sake, I withhold from Lord

Byron,) nothing would induce me to share in the profits, and still less in the borrowed splendour, of such a partnership.* You and he, in different manners, would be equal, and would bring, in a different manner, but in the same proportion, equal stocks of reputation and success: do not let my frankness with you, nor my belief that you deserve it more than Lord Byron, have the effect of deterring you from assuming a station in modern literature, which the universal voice of my contemporaries forbids me either to stoop or aspire to. I am, and I desire to be, nothing.

I did not ask Lord Byron to assist me in sending a remittance for your journey; because there are men, however excellent, from whom we would never receive an obligation, in the worldly sense of the word; and I am as jealous for my friend as for myself. I, as you know, have it not: but I suppose that at last I shall make up an impudent face, and ask

* Mr. Shelley afterwards altered his mind; but he had a reserved intention underneath it, which he would have endeavoured to put in practice, had his friend allowed him.

Horace Smith to add to the many obligations he has conferred on me. I know I need only ask.

I think I have never told you how very much I like your Amyntas; it almost reconciles me to Translations. In another sense, I still demur. You might have written another such poem as the "Nymphs," with no great access of effort.* I am full of thoughts and

* In one of Lord Byron's letters, having a quarrel with the memory of Mr. Shelley, and being angry with me for loving it so entirely, his Lordship tells me that I was mistaken if I thought Mr. Shelley entertained a very high opinion of my poetry. I answered, that I had already had the mortification of making that discovery; upon which he expressed his vexation at having told it me. I did not add, that I believed Mr. Shelley's opinion of my poetry to have decreased since his becoming used to his Lordship's libels of his "friends all round," and that he had latterly exhibited an uneasy suspicion that his intimacy had had an ill effect upon his kindlier views of things in general. But I must own, that I never looked upon Mr. Shelley's real opinion of my poetry as any thing very great; though his affection for me, and his sympathy with the world I lived in, poetical as well as political, sometimes led him to persuade himself otherwise. I suspect he had a very accurate notion of it; greater than what vulgar critics would think just, but as little as a due appreciation of poetry, properly so called, could admit.

plans, and should do something if the feeble and irritable frame which incloses it was willing to obey the spirit. I fancy that then I should do great things. Before this you will have seen "Adonais." Lord Byron, I suppose from modesty on account of his being mentioned in it, did not say a word of "Adonais," though he was loud in his praise of "Prometheus:" and, what you will not agree with him in, censure of the "Cenci." Certainly, if "Marino Faliero" is a drama, the "Cenci" is not: but that between ourselves. Lord Byron is reformed, as far as gallantry goes, and lives with a beautiful and sentimental Italian lady, who is as much attached to him as may be. I trust greatly to his intercourse with you, for his creed to become as pure as he thinks his conduct is. He has many generous and exalted qualities, but the canker of aristocracy wants to be cut out.

* * * * *

JOHN KEATS.

Engraved by Henry Meyer after a sketch drawn from life by Severn

Published by Henry Colburn, London, 1828

MAHARAJA SERFOJI'S SARASWATI MAHAL. THE TANJORE

MR. KEATS.

WITH A CRITICISM ON HIS WRITINGS.

Mr. Keats, when he died, had just completed his four-and-twentieth year. He was under the middle height; and his lower limbs were small in comparison with the upper, but neat and well-turned. His shoulders were very broad for his size: he had a face, in which energy and sensibility were remarkably mixed up, an eager power checked and made patient by ill health. Every feature was at once strongly cut, and delicately alive. If there was any faulty expression, it was in the mouth, which was not without something of a character of pugnacity. The face was rather long

than otherwise; the upper lip projected a little over the under; the chin was bold, the cheeks sunken; the eyes mellow and glowing; large, dark and sensitive. At the recital of a noble action, or a beautiful thought, they would suffuse with tears, and his mouth trembled. In this, there was ill health as well as imagination, for he did not like these betrayals of emotion; and he had great personal as well as moral courage. His hair, of a brown colour, was fine, and hung in natural ringlets. The head was a puzzle for the phrenologists, being remarkably small in the skull; a singularity which he had in common with Lord Byron and Mr. Shelley, none of whose hats I could get on. Mr. Keats was sensible of the disproportion above noticed, between his upper and lower extremities; and he would look at his hand, which was faded, and swollen in the veins, and say it was the hand of a man of fifty. He was a seven months' child: his mother, who was a lively woman, passionately fond of amusement, is supposed to have hastened her death by too great an inattention to hours

and seasons. Perhaps she hastened that of her son.

Mr. Keats's origin was of the humblest description; he was born October 29, 1796, at a livery-stables in Moorfields, of which his grandfather was the proprietor. I am very incurious, and did not know this till the other day. He never spoke of it, perhaps out of a personal soreness which the world had exasperated. After receiving the rudiments of a classical education at Mr. Clarke's school at Enfield, he was bound apprentice to Mr. Hammond, a surgeon, in Church-street, Edmonton; and his enemies having made a jest even of this, he did not like to be reminded of it; at once disdaining them for their meanness, and himself for being sick enough to be moved by them. Mr. Clarke, junior, his schoolmaster's son, a reader of genuine discernment, had encouraged with great warmth the genius that he saw in the young poet; and it was to Mr. Clarke I was indebted for my acquaintance with him. I shall never forget the impression made upon me by the exuberant specimens of genuine

though young poetry that were laid before me, and the promise of which was seconded by the fine fervid countenance of the writer. We became intimate on the spot, and I found the young poet's heart as warm as his imagination. We read and walked together, and used to write verses of an evening upon a given subject. No imaginative pleasure was left unnoticed by us, or unenjoyed; from the recollection of the bards and patriots of old, to the luxury of a summer rain at our window, or the clicking of the coal in winter-time. Not long afterwards, having the pleasure of entertaining at dinner Mr. Godwin, Mr. Hazlitt, and Mr. Basil Montague, I showed them the verses of my young friend, and they were pronounced to be as extraordinary as I thought them. One of them was that noble sonnet on first reading Chapman's Homer, which terminates with so energetic a calmness, and which completely announced the new poet taking possession. As Mr. Keats's first juvenile volume is not much known, I will repeat the sonnet here, as a remarkable instance of a vein prematurely masculine.

ON FIRST LOOKING INTO CHAPMAN'S HOMER.

Much have I travelled in the realms of gold,
And many goodly states and kingdoms seen;
Round many western islands have I been,
Which bards in fealty to Apollo hold;
Oft of one wide expanse had I been told,
That deep-brow'd Homer ruled as his demesne;
Yet did I never breathe its pure serene,
Till I heard Chapman speak out loud and bold.
Then felt I like some watcher of the skies,
When a new planet swims into his ken,
Or like stout Cortez, when with eagle eyes
He star'd at the Pacific—and all his men
Look'd at each other with a wild surmise,
Silent, upon a peak in Darien.

Modern criticism has made the public well acquainted with the merits of Chapman. The retainers of some schools of poetry may not see very far into his old oracular style; but the poets themselves (the true test of poetical merit) have always felt the impression. Waller professed that he could never read him without a movement of transport; and Pope, in the preface to his translation, says that he was animated by a daring fiery spirit, something like what we may conceive of Homer himself "be-

fore he arrived at years of discretion." Chapman certainly stands upon no ceremony. He blows as rough a blast as Achilles could have desired to hear, very different from the soft music of a parade. "The whales exult" under his Neptune, playing unwieldy gambols; and his Ulysses issues out of the shipwreck, "soaked to the very heart;" tasting of sea-weeds and salt-water, in a style that does not at all mince the matter, or consult the proprieties of Brighton. Mr. Keats's epithets of "loud and bold," showed that he understood him thoroughly. The men of Cortez staring at each other, and the eagle eyes of their leader looking out upon the Pacific, have been thought too violent a picture for the dignity of the occasion; but it is a case that requires the exception. Cortez's "eagle eyes" are a piece of historical painting, as the reader may see by Titian's portrait of him. The last line,

"Silent—upon a peak in Darien,"

makes the mountain a part of the spectacle, and supports the emotion of the rest of the sonnet upon a basis of gigantic tranquillity.

The volume containing this sonnet was published in 1817, when the author was in his twenty-first year. The poem with which it begins, was suggested to him by a delightful summer-day, as he stood beside the gate that leads from the Battery on Hampstead Heath into a field by Caen Wood; and the last poem, the one "On Sleep and Poetry," was occasioned by his sleeping in one of the cottages in the Vale of Health, the first one that fronts the valley, beginning from the same quarter. I mention these things, which now look trivial, because his readers will not think them so twenty years hence. It was in the beautiful lane, running from the road between Hampstead and Highgate to the foot of Highgate Hill, that, meeting me one day, he first gave me the volume. If the admirer of Mr. Keats's poetry does not know the lane in question, he ought to become acquainted with it, both on his author's account and its own. It has been also paced by Mr. Lamb and Mr. Hazlitt, and frequented, like the rest of the beautiful neighbourhood, by Mr. Coleridge; so that instead of Millfield Lane, which is the

name it is known by "on earth," it has sometimes been called Poets' Lane, which is an appellation it richly deserves. It divides the grounds of Lords Mansfield and Southampton, running through trees and sloping meadows, and being rich in the botany for which this part of the neighbourhood of London has always been celebrated. I recommend it, contrary to the interests of my solitude; but the mischief done me by sociality pleases me, as usual, still better.

"A drainless shower
Of light is poesy ; 'tis the supreme of power ;
'Tis might half slumb'ring on its own right arm."

These are some more of the lines in a book, in which feeble critics thought they saw nothing but feebleness. Here are four more, out of a profusion of mixed youth and beauty :— the writer is speaking of some engraved portraits, that adorned the room he slept in :—

"Great Alfred's too, with anxious, pitying eyes,
As if he always listened to the sighs
Of the goaded world ; and Kosciusko's, worn
With horrid suff'rance,—*mightily forlorn.*"

But there were political opinions in the book; and these not according with the opinions of the then government authorities, the writer was found to be a very absurd person, and not to be borne. His youth, and the sincerity natural to youth, to say nothing of personal predilections, which are things that nobody has a right to indulge in but the affectionate followers of office, all told against instead of for him in the eyes of a servile weakness, jealous of independence in others, and (to say the truth) not very capable of discerning the greatest talent. To admire and comment upon the genius that two or three hundred years have applauded, and to discover what will partake of the applause two or three hundred years hence, are processes of a very different description. Accordingly, when Mr. Keats, in 1818, published his next volume, his poetic romance entitled "Endymion," the critical authority, then reigning at the west end, showed it no mercy. What completed the matter was, that his publisher, in a fright, went to the critic to conciliate him; as if the greater and more insolent the

opportunity of trampling, the petty tyrant would not be the happier to seize it. Mr. Gifford gave his visitor very plainly to understand that such would be the case. Such it was; and though the bookseller, who in reality had a better taste than the critic, and very properly felt piqued to support his author, stood by him in the publication of another volume, the sale of both volumes was neutralized in that gratuitous acquiescence with the critics, in which the public have since learnt not to be quite so trusting.

"Endymion," it must be allowed, was not a little calculated to perplex the critics. It was a wilderness of sweets, but it was truly a wilderness; a domain of young, luxuriant, uncompromising poetry, where the "weeds of glorious feature" hampered the petty legs accustomed to the lawns and trodden walks, in vogue for the last hundred years; lawns, as Johnson says, "shaven by the scythe, and levelled with the roller;" walks, which, being public property, have been re-consecrated, like Kensington Gardens, by the beadles of authority, instead of the Pans and Sylvans. Mr.

Wordsworth knew better than the critics, but he did not choose to say any thing. He stood upon equivocal footing himself, his greatest poetical recommendation arising from the most prosaical action of his life, to wit, his acceptance of the office of Distributor of Stamps. Mr. Keats, meeting him one day at Mr. Haydon's,—the same day when Lamb said that good thing about Voltaire*,—our young poet was induced to repeat to the older one the Hymn to Pan out of "Endymion;" upon which Mr. Wordsworth said it was a "very pretty piece of Paganism." A new poet had come up, who

"Had sight of Proteus coming from the sea:"

and certainly "the world was not too much with him." But this, which is a thing desired by Lake Poets in their abstractions, is a presumption in the particular, and not to be countenanced. "Such sights as youthful poets dream" must cease, when their predecessors grow old; when they get jealous as fading

* See the Memoir of Mr. Lamb.

beauties, and have little annuities for behaving themselves.

The great fault of "Endymion," next to its unpruned luxuriance, (or before it, rather, for it was not a fault on the right side,) was the wilfulness of its rhymes. The author had a just contempt for the monotonous termination of every-day couplets; he broke up his lines in order to distribute the rhyme properly; but going only upon the ground of his contempt, and not having yet settled with himself any principle of versification, the very exuberance of his ideas led him to make use of the first rhymes that offered; so that, by a new meeting of extremes, the effect was as artificial, and much more obtrusive than the one under the old system. Dryden modestly confessed, that a rhyme had often helped him to a thought. Mr. Keats, in the tyranny of his wealth, forced his rhymes to help him, whether they would or not; and they obeyed him, in the most singular manner, with equal promptitude and ungainness. "Endymion," too, was not without its faults of weakness, as well as of power. Mr. Keats's natural tendency to plea-

sure, as a poet, sometimes degenerated, by reason of his ill health, into a poetical effeminacy. There are symptoms of it here and there in all his productions, not excepting the gigantic grandeur of Hyperion. His lovers grow "faint" with the sight of their mistresses; and Apollo, when he is superseding his divine predecessor, and undergoing his transformation into a Divus Major, suffers a little too exquisitely among his lilies. But Mr. Keats was aware of this contradiction to the real energy of his nature, and prepared to get rid of it. What is more, he said as much in the Preface to "Endymion," and in a manner calculated to conciliate all critics who were worth touching his volume; but not such were those, from whom the public were to receive their notions of him. Let the reader see it, and wish, if he has hitherto read nothing but criticism upon him, that he had seen it before.

"Knowing," says Mr. Keats, "within myself, the manner in which this poem has been produced, it is not without a feeling of regret that I make it public.

"What manner I mean will be quite clear

to the reader, who must soon perceive great inexperience, immaturity, and every error denoting a feverish attempt rather than a deed accomplished. The two first books, and indeed the two last, I feel sensible, are not of such completion as to warrant their passing the press; nor should they, if I thought a year's castigation would do them any good; it will not; the foundations are too sandy. It is just that this youngster should die away: a sad thought for me, if I had not some hope that while it is dwindling I may be plotting, and fitting myself for verses fit to live.

"This may be speaking too presumptuously, and may deserve a punishment: but no feeling man will be forward to inflict it: he will leave me alone, with the conviction that there is not a fiercer hell than the failure in a great object. This is not written with the least atom of purpose to forestall criticisms of course, but from the desire I have to conciliate men who are competent to look, and who do look with a zealous eye, to the honour of English literature.

"The imagination of a boy is healthy, and the mature imagination of man is healthy; but

there is a space between, in which the soul is in a ferment, the character undecided, the way of life uncertain, the ambition thick-sighted: thence proceed mawkishness, and all the thousand bitters which those men I speak of must necessarily taste in going over the following pages.

"I hope I have not in too late a day touched the beautiful mythology of Greece, and dulled its brightness: for I wish to try it once more before I bid it farewell.

"Teignmouth, April 10, 1818."

An organized system of abuse had come up at this period, of a nature with which it was thought no department of literature had hitherto been polluted. The mistake was natural, after a long interval of decorum; but similar abuses have always taken place, when society was not better occupied, or when jealousy and party spleen paid an adversary the compliment of thinking itself sufficiently provoked. A shelf full of scandal might be collected against Dryden and Pope. "The life of a wit," said Steele, "is a warfare upon earth;"

and he had good reason to know it. There was a man of the name of Baker, who made it his business to assail him with criticisms and personalities. The wits themselves too often assailed one another, and in a manner worthy of their calumniators, of which there is humiliating evidence in the lives of Addison and Swift. Even Shakspeare was not without his libeller. Somebody in his time accused him, in common with his fellow play-wrights, of irreligion,—nay, of personal arrogance, and of taking himself for the only "Shake-scene" of the theatre. The new taste in calumny, however, surpassed all the other, by its avowed contempt for truth and decency. It seemed to think, that by an excess of impudence it would confound objection, and even bully itself out of the last lingerings of conscience; and the public, who were mean enough to enjoy what they condemned, enabled the plot to succeed. The lowest and falsest personalities were a trifle. Privacies were invaded, in a way to make the stoutest hearts tremble for the gentlest and most pitiable; and with an instinct common to the despicable, every delicacy was taken advan-

tage of, that could secure impunity to offence. Even cowardice itself was avowed as a thing profitable. In short, never before was seen such a conspiracy between a reckless love of importance, cold calculation, and party and private resentment. Not being tied down by hard logic or Calvinism, the Scotch, it was said, were resolved to show how difficult it was for them to understand any other principle. Having no throats to cut as Jacobites or Puritans, they must run a muck as Drawcansirs in literature. Not being able to be Reevers of Westburn Flat, they were to plunder people of their characters, and warm the chill poverty of their imaginations at the blushes and distresses of private life.† Unfortunately, some of the knaves were not destitute of talent: the younger were tools of older ones, who kept out of sight. * * * * *

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Sir Walter Scott calls this, I believe, a reaction in favour of legitimate ideas. Legitimate

† I confess that one Burns or one Thomson is enough to sweeten all Scotland, in my imagination; which is saying a good deal, after what Edinburgh has done for it.

ideas are obliged to him for the compliment, and are very much his humble servants: but I doubt whether the Government of 1828 will agree with him, as the Pittites did; and a present Government is a great thing, as the Reviewers have found out. Your absent deity is nothing to your *præsens divus.*

The contrivers of this system of calumny thought that it suited their views, trading, political, and personal, to attack the writer of the present work. They did so, and his friends with him, Mr. Keats among the number. Had the hostility been fair, I was a fair object of attack, having not only taken a warm part in politics, but in a very thoughtless and immature spirit attacked people critically, Sir Walter among them. But then I did it openly: my books were not published without a name; and word was always left at the Examiner office, where I was to be found, in case explanation was demanded of any thing I wrote in the paper. I therefore treated these anonymous assailants with indifference in the first instance; and certainly should not have noticed them at all, had not another person chosen to

call upon them in my name. Circumstances then induced me to make a more peremptory call: it was not answered; and the two parties retreated,—they into their meanness, and I into my contempt. I have since regretted, on Mr. Keats's account, that I did not take a more active part. The scorn which the public and they would feel for one another, before long, was evident enough; but, in the meantime, an injury, in every point of view, was done to a young and sensitive nature, to which I ought to have been more alive. The truth was, I never thought about it; nor, I believe, did he, with a view to my taking any farther notice. I was in the habit, though a public man, of living in a world of abstractions of my own, and I regarded him as a nature still more abstracted, and sure of unsought renown. Though a politician, (such as I was,) I had scarcely a political work in my library. Spensers and Arabian Tales filled up the shelves, as they do now; and Spenser himself was not a remoter spirit in my eyes, from all the commonplaces of life, than my new friend. Our whole talk was made up of idealisms. In the

streets we were in the thick of the old woods. I little suspected at that time, as I did afterwards, that the hunters had struck him; that a delicate organization, which already anticipated a premature death, made him feel his ambition thwarted by these fellows; and that the very impatience of being impatient was resented by him, and preyed on his mind. Had he said but a word to me on the subject, I would have kept no measures with them. There were delicacies on other subjects, which I had leave to merge in greater ones, had I chosen it; and, in a case like this, it should have been done.

In every thing but this reserve, which was encouraged by my own incuriousness, (for I have no reserve myself with those whom I love,)—in every other respect but this, Mr. Keats and I were friends of the old stamp, between whom there was no such thing as obligation, except the pleasure of it. He enjoyed the usual privilege of greatness with all whom he knew, rendering it delightful to be obliged by him, and an equal, but not a greater

delight, to oblige. It was a pleasure to his friends to have him in their houses, and he did not grudge it. When "Endymion" was published, he was living at Hampstead with his friend Mr. Charles Brown, who attended him most affectionately through a severe illness, and with whom, to their great mutual enjoyment, he had taken a journey into Scotland. The lakes and mountains of the North delighted him exceedingly. He beheld them with an epic eye. Afterwards, he went into the South, and luxuriated in the Isle of Wight. On Mr. Brown's leaving England, a second time, to visit the same quarter, Mr. Keats, who was too ill to accompany him, came to reside with me, when his last and best volume of poems appeared, containing *Lamia*, *Isabella*, the *Eve of St. Agnes*, and the noble fragment of *Hyperion*. I remember Charles Lamb's delight and admiration on reading this work; how pleased he was with the designation of Mercury as "the star of Lethe" (rising, as it were, and glittering, as he came upon that pale region); with the fine daring anticipation in that passage of the second poem,—

"So the two brothers and *their murdered man*
Rode past fair Florence;"

and with the description, at once delicate and gorgeous, of Agnes praying beneath the painted window. This last (which should be called, *par excellence*, the Prayer at the Painted Window) has been often quoted; but for the benefit of those who are not yet acquainted with the author's genius, farther than by means of these pages, I cannot resist repeating it. It throws a light upon one's book.

"A casement high and triple-arch'd there was,
All garlanded with carven imag'ries
Of fruits, and flowers, and bunches of knot-grass,
And diamonded with panes of quaint device,
Innumerable of stains and splendid dyes,
As are the tiger-moth's deep-damask'd wings;
And in the midst, 'mong thousand heraldries,
And twilight saints, and dim emblazonings,
A shielded scutcheon blush'd with blood of queens
and kings.

"Full on this casement shone the wintry moon,
And threw warm gules on Madeline's fair breast,
As down she knelt for heaven's grace and boon;
Rose bloom fell on her hands, together press'd,

And on her silver cross soft amethyst,
And on her hair a glory, like a saint:
She seem'd a splendid angel, newly dress'd,
Save wings, for heaven."

The whole volume is worthy of this passage. Mr. Keats is no half-painter, who has only distinct ideas occasionally, and fills up the rest with commonplaces. He feels all as he goes. In his best pieces, every bit is precious; and he knew it, and laid it on as carefully as Titian or Giorgione. Take a few more samples

LOVERS.

"Parting they seem'd to tread upon the air,
Twin roses by the zephyr blown apart,
Only to meet again more close, and share
The inward fragrance of each other's heart."

BEES.

"Bees, the little almsmen of spring bowers."

A DELICATE SUPPER.

"And still she slept an azure-lidded sleep
In blanched linen smooth and lavender'd,
While he from forth the closet brought a heap
Of candied apple, quince, and plum, and gourd;

With jellies soother than the creamy curd,
And lucent syrops, tinct with cinnamon;
Manna and dates, in argosy transferr'd
From Fez: and spiced dainties, every one,
From silken Samarcand to cedar'd Lebanon."

These are stanzas, for which Persian kings would fill a poet's mouth with gold. I remember Mr. Keats reading these lines to me with great relish and particularity, conscious of what he had set forth. The melody is as sweet as the subject, especially at

"Lucent syrops tinct with cinnamon,"

and the conclusion. Mr. Wordsworth would say that the vowels were not varied enough; but Mr. Keats knew where his vowels were *not* to be varied. On the occasion above alluded to, Mr. Wordsworth found fault with the repetition of the concluding sound of the participles in Shakspeare's line about bees:—

The *singing* masons *building* roofs of gold.

This, he said, was a line which Milton would never have written. Mr. Keats thought, on

the other hand, that the repetition was in harmony with the continued note of the singers, and that Shakspeare's negligence (if negligence it was) had instinctively felt the thing in the best manner. The assertion about Milton startles one, considering the tendency of that great poet to subject his nature to art; yet I have dipped, while writing this, into "Paradise Lost," and at the second chance have lit on the following:

> The gray
> Dawn, and the Pleiades before him danced,
> Shedding sweet influence. Less bright the moon,
> But opposite, *in levelled west, was set*
> His mirrour, with full force borrowing her light.

The repetition of the *e* in the fourth line is an extreme case in point, being monotonous to express one-ness and evenness. Milton would have relished the supper which his young successor, like a page for him, has set forth. It was Mr. Keats who observed to me, that Milton, in various parts of his writings, has shown himself a bit of an epicure, and loves to talk of good eating. That he was choice in his food, and set store by a good cook, there is curious evi-

dence to be found in the proving of his Will; by which it appears, that dining one day "in the kitchen," he complimented Mrs. Milton, by the appropriate title of "Betty," on the dish she had set before him; adding, as if he could not pay her too well for it, "Thou knowest I have left thee all." Henceforth let a kitchen be illustrious, should a gentleman choose to take a cutlet in it. But houses and their customs were different in those days.

CALAMITIES FOLLOWING CALAMITIES.

There was a listening fear in her regard,
As if calamity had but begun;
As if its vanward clouds of evil days
Had spent their malice, *and the sullen rear*
Was with its stored thunder labouring up.

This is out of the fragment of "Hyperion," which is truly like the fragment of a former world. There is a voice in it grander than any that has been uttered in these times, except in some of Mr. Wordsworth's sonnets; though the author, in a noble verse, has regretted its inadequacy to his subject.

Oh how frail
To that large utterance of the early Gods!

OAKS CHARMED BY THE STARS.

As when upon a tranced summer-night
Those green-rob'd senators of mighty woods,
Tall oaks, branch-charmed by the earnest stars,
Dream, and so dream all night without a stir,
Save from one gradual solitary gust
Which comes upon the silence, and dies off,
As if the ebbing air had but one wave;
So came these words and went.

A GOD RECLINING IN SORROW.

And all along a dismal rack of clouds,
Upon the boundaries of day and night,
He stretch'd himself, in grief and radiance faint.

THE ELDER GODS DETHRONED.

Mnemosyne was straying in the world;
Far from her throne had Phœbe wandered;
And many else were free to roam abroad;
But for the main here found they covert drear,
Scarce images of life, one here, one there,
Lay vast and edgeways; *like a dismal cirque*
Of Druid stones upon a forlorn moor,
When the chill rain begins at shut of eve,
In dull November, and their chancel vault,
The Heaven itself, is blinded throughout night.

But I shall fill my book with quotations. A criticism, entering more into the nature of the author's genius, may be found by any one who wishes to see it, in the "Indicator." One or two passages, however, in the fine lyrical pieces in this volume, must be noticed. One is on a sculptured vase, representing a procession with music; upon which the author says, with an intensity of sentiment, at once original in the idea, and going home, like an old thought, to the heart—

"Heard melodies are sweet, but those unheard
 Are sweeter; therefore, ye soft pipes, play on;
Not to the sensual ear, but, more endear'd,
 Pipe to the spirit ditties of no tone:
Fair youth, beneath the trees, thou can'st not leave
 Thy song, nor ever can those trees be bare;
  Bold Lover, never, never canst thou kiss,
Though winning near the goal—yet, do not grieve;
  She cannot fade, though thou hast not thy bliss;
 For ever wilt thou love, and she be fair."

Upon this beautiful passage, a sapient critic observed, that he should like to know how there could be music unheard. The reader will be more surprised to know who it was that asked what was the meaning, in the fol-

lowing ode, of a beaker "*full of the warm south.*" As Mr. Keats's poems are in few hands, compared to what they will be, I will not apologize for transcribing the whole of a beautiful poem, which in a very touching manner falls in with the poetical biography of the author, having been composed by him while he lay sleepless and suffering under the illness which he felt to be mortal.

ODE TO A NIGHTINGALE.

My heart aches, and a drowsy numbness pains
  My sense, as though of hemlock I had drunk,
Or emptied some dull opiate to the drains
  One minute past, and Lethe-wards had sunk:
    'Tis not through envy of thy happy lot,
But being too happy in thine happiness,
  That thou, light-winged Dryad of the trees,
    In most melodious plot
Of beechen green and shadows numberless,
  Singest of summer in full-throated ease.

Oh for a draught of vintage that hath been
  Cool'd a long age in the deep-delved earth,
Tasting of Flora and the country green;
  Dance, and Provençal song, and sunburnt mirth!
    Oh for a beaker full of the warm South,
Full of the true, the blushful Hippocrene,

With beaded bubbles winking at the brim,
And purple-stained mouth!
That I might drink, and leave the world unseen,
And with thee fade away into the forest dim;—

Fade far away, dissolve, and quite forget
What thou among the leaves hast never known,
The weariness, the fever, and the fret,
Here, where men sit and hear each other groan;
Where palsy shakes a few sad, last, grey hairs;
Where youth grows pale, and spectre-thin, and dies;
Where still to think is to be full of sorrow
And leaden-eyed despairs;
Where Beauty cannot keep her lustrous eyes,
Or new Love pine at them beyond to-morrow.

Away! away! for I will fly to thee,
Not charioted by Bacchus and his pards,
But on the viewless wings of Poesy,
Though the dull brain perplexes and retards:
Already with thee! tender is the night,
And haply the Queen-Moon is on her throne,
Cluster'd around by all her starry fays;
But here there is no light,
Save what from heaven is with the breezes blown
Through verdurous glooms and winding mossy ways.

I cannot see what flowers are at my feet,
Nor what soft incense hangs upon the boughs,
But in embalmed darkness guess each sweet
Wherewith the seasonable month endows
The grass, the thicket, and the fruit-tree wild;

White hawthorn, and the pastoral eglantine,
Fast fading violets covered up in leaves;
And mid-May's eldest child,
The coming musk-rose full of dewy wine,
The murmurous haunt of flies on summer eves.

Darkling I listen; and for many a time
I have been half in love with easeful Death;
Call'd him soft names in many a mused rhyme,
To take into the air my quiet breath.
Now more than ever seems it rich to die,
To cease upon the midnight with no pain,
While thou art pouring forth thy soul abroad
In such an ecstasy!
Still wouldst thou sing, and I have ears in vain—
To thy high requiem become a sod.

Thou wast not born for death, immortal bird!
No hungry generations tread thee down;
The voice I hear this passing night was heard
In ancient days by emperor and clown:
Perhaps the self-same song that found path
Through the sad heart of Ruth, when, sick for home,
She stood in tears amid the alien corn;
The same that ofttime hath
Charm'd magic casements, opening on the foam
Of perilous seas, in faery lands forlorn.—

Forlorn! the very word is like a bell
To toll me back from thee to my sole self.
Adieu! the Fancy cannot cheat so well
As she is fam'd to do, deceiving elf!

Adieu! adieu! thy plaintive anthem fades
Past the near meadows, over the still stream,
Up the hill side; and now 'tis buried deep
In the next valley glades.
Was it a vision, or a waking dream?
Fled is that music:—Do I wake or sleep?

It was Lord Byron, at that time living in Italy, drinking its wine, and basking in its sunshine, who asked me what was the meaning of a beaker "full of the warm south." It was not the word beaker that puzzled him: College had made him intimate enough with that. But the sort of poetry in which he excelled, was not accustomed to these poetical concentrations. At the moment also, he was willing to find fault, and did not wish to discern an excellence different from his own. When I told him, that Mr. Keats admired his "Don Juan," he expressed both surprise and pleasure, and afterwards mentioned him with respect in a canto of it. He could not resist, however, making undue mention of one of the causes that affected his health. A good rhyme about *particle* and *article* was not to be given up. I told him he was mistaken in

attributing Mr. Keats's death to the critics, though they had perhaps hastened, and certainly embittered it; and he promised to alter the passage: but a joke and a rhyme together! Those Italian shrugs of the shoulders, which I hope will never be imported among us, are at once a lamentation and an excuse for every thing; and I cannot help using one here. At all events, I have kept my promise, to make the erratum myself in case it did not appear.

Mr. Keats had felt that his disease was mortal for two or three years before he died. He had a constitutional tendency to consumption; a close attendance to the death-bed of a beloved brother, when he ought to have been nursing himself in bed, gave it a blow which he felt for months; and meanwhile the rascally critics came up, and roused an indignation in him, both against them and himself, which he could ill afford to endure. All this trouble was secretly aggravated by a very tender circumstance, which I can but allude to thus publicly, and which naturally subjected one of the warmest hearts and imaginations

that ever existed, to all the pangs, that doubt, succeeded by delight, and delight, succeeded by hopelessness in this world, could inflict. Seeing him once change countenance in a manner more alarming than usual, as he stood silently eyeing the country out of window, I pressed him to let me know how he felt, in order that he might enable me to do what I could for him; upon which he said, that his feelings were almost more than he could bear, and that he feared for his senses. I proposed that we should take a coach, and ride about the country together, to vary, if possible, the immediate impression, which was sometimes all that was formidable, and would come to nothing. He acquiesced, and was restored to himself. It was nevertheless on the same day, sitting on the bench in Well Walk, at Hampstead, nearest the heath,* that he told me, with unaccustomed tears in his eyes, that "his heart was breaking." A doubt, however, was upon him at the time, which he afterwards had reason to know was groundless; and dur-

* The one against the wall.

ing his residence at the last house that he occupied before he went abroad, he was at times more than tranquil. At length, he was persuaded by his friends to try the milder climate of Italy; and he thought it better for others as well as himself that he should go. He was accompanied by Mr. Severn, a young artist of great promise, who has since been well known as the principal English student at Rome, and who possessed all that could recommend him for a companion,—old acquaintanceship, great animal spirits, active tenderness, and a mind capable of appreciating that of the poet. They went first to Naples, and afterwards to Rome; where, on the 27th of December, 1820, our author died in the arms of his friend, completely worn out, and longing for the release. He suffered so much in his lingering, that he used to watch the countenance of the physician for the favourable and fatal sentence, and express his regret when he found it delayed. Yet no impatience escaped him. He was manly and gentle to the last, and grateful for all services. A little before he died, he said that he "felt the daisies growing over him." But he made

a still more touching remark respecting his epitaph. "If any," he said, "were put over him, he wished it to consist of nothing but these words: 'Here lies one, whose name was writ in water:'"—so little did he think of the more than promise he had given;—of the fine and lasting things he had added to the stock of poetry. The physicians expressed their astonishment that he had held out so long, the lungs turning out, on inspection, to have been almost obliterated. They said he must have lived upon the mere strength of the spirit within him. He was interred in the English burying-ground at Rome, near the monument of Caius Cestius, where his friend and poetical mourner, Mr. Shelley, was shortly to join him.

So much for the mortal life of as true a man of genius as these latter times have seen; one of those who are too genuine and too original to be properly appreciated at first, but whose time for applause will infallibly arrive with the many, and has already begun in all poetical quarters. I venture to prophesy, as I have done elsewhere, that Mr. Keats will be known hereafter in English literature, emphatically, as

the Young Poet; and that his volumes will be the sure companions, in field and grove, of all those who know what a luxury it is to hasten, with a favourite volume against one's heart, out of the strife of commonplaces into the haven of solitude and imagination.

MR. KEATS

TO

MR. LEIGH HUNT.

Margate, May 10th.

MY DEAR HUNT,

The little gentleman that sometimes lurks in a gossip's bowl, ought to have come in the very likeness of a *roasted* crab, and choaked me outright for not having answered your letter ere this: however, you must not suppose that I was in town to receive it: no, it followed me to the Isle of Wight, and I got it just as I was going to pack up for Margate, for reasons which you anon shall hear. On arriving at this treeless affair, I wrote to my brother George to request C. C. C. to do the thing

you wot of respecting Rimini; and George tells me he has undertaken it with great pleasure; so I hope there has been an understanding between you for many proofs: C. C. C. is well acquainted with Bensley. Now, why did you not send the key of your cupboard, which, I know, was full of papers? We would have locked them all in a trunk, together with those you told me to destroy, which indeed I did not do, for fear of demolishing receipts, there not being a more unpleasant thing in the world (saving a thousand and one others) than to pay a bill twice. Mind you, old W——'s a "very varmint," sharded in covetousness:—and now I am upon a horrid subject- what a horrid one you were upon last Sunday, and well you handled it.

* * * * * *

* * * * * *

What is to be the end of this? I must mention Hazlitt's Southey. O that he had left out the grey hairs; or that they had been in any other newspaper not concluding with such a thunderclap! That sentence about making a page of the feeling of a whole life, appears to

me like a whale's back in the sea of prose. I ought to have said a word on Shakspeare's Christianity. There are two (passages) which I have not looked over with you, touching the thing; the one for, the other against; that in favour is in Measure for Measure, Act. ii. Scene 2.

Isab. "Alas, alas!
Why all the souls that were, were forfeit once;
And he that might the 'vantage best have took,
Found out the remedy.

That against is in "Twelfth Night," Act. iii. Scene 2.

Maria. "For there is no Christian that means to be saved by believing rightly, can ever believe such impossible passages of grossness."

Before I come to the Nymphs, I must get through all disagreeables. I went to the Isle of Wight, thought so much about poetry, so long together, that I could not get to sleep at night; and, moreover, I know not how it is, I could not get wholesome food. By this means, in a week or so, I became not over

capable in my upper stories, and set off pell-mell for Margate, at least a hundred and fifty miles, because, forsooth, I fancied I should like my old lodgings here, and could contrive to do without trees. Another thing, I was too much in solitude, and consequently was obliged to be in continual burning of thought, as an only resource. However, Tom is with me at present, and we are very comfortable. We intend, though, to get among some trees. How have you got on among them? How are the Nymphs? I suppose they have led you a fine dance. Where are you now?—in Judea, Cappadocia, or the parts of Lydia about Cyrene? * * * * I wager you have given several new turns to the old saying, "Now the maid was fair and pleasant to look on," as well as made a little variation in "Once upon a time." Perhaps, too, you have rather varied, "Here endeth the first lesson." * * * *
I have asked myself so often why I should be a poet more than other men, seeing how great a thing it is,—how great things are to be gained by it, what a thing to be in the mouth of Fame,—that at last the idea has grown so

monstrously beyond my seeming power of attainment, that the other day I nearly consented with myself to drop into a Phaeton. Yet 'tis a disgrace to fail, even in a huge attempt; and at this moment I drive the thought from me. I began my poem about a fortnight since, and have done some every day, except travelling ones. Perhaps I may have done a good deal for the time; but it appears such a pin's point to me, that I will not copy any out. When I consider that so many of these pin-points go to form a bodkin-point, [God send I end not my life with a bare bodkin, in its modern sense!] and that it requires a thousand bodkins to make a spear bright enough to throw any light to posterity, I see nothing but continual up-hill journeying. Now, is there any thing more unpleasant (it may come among the thousand and one) than to be so journeying and to miss the goal at last? But I intend to whistle all these cogitations into the sea, where I hope they will breed storms violent enough to block up all exit from Russia. Does Shelley go on telling strange stories of

the death of kings?* Tell him, there are strange stories of the death of poets. Some have died before they were conceived. "How do you make that out, Master Vellum?" Does Mrs. S. cut bread and butter as neatly as ever? Tell her to procure some fatal scissors, and cut the thread of life of all to-be-disappointed poets. Does Mrs. Hunt tear linen as straight as ever? Tell her to tear from the book of

* Mr. Shelley was fond of quoting the passage here alluded to in Shakspeare, and of applying it in the most unexpected manner.

> "For God's sake, let us sit upon the ground,
> And tell strange stories of the deaths of kings.

Going with me to town once in the Hampstead stage, in which our only companion was an old lady, who sat silent and stiff after the English fashion, he startled her into a look of the most ludicrous astonishment by saying abruptly; "Hunt,

> 'For God's sake, let us sit upon the ground,'" &c.

The old lady looked on the coach-floor, as if she expected to see us take our seats accordingly.

The reader who has perused the preceding notice of Mr. Keats, will be touched by the melancholy anticipations that follow, and that are made in so good-humoured a manner.

life all blank leaves. Remember me to them all; to Miss K. and the little ones all.

Your sincere friend,

JOHN KEATS, alias JUNKETS.*

You shall hear where we move.

* An appellation that was given him in play upon his name, and in allusion to his friends of Fairy-land.

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.

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